The Complete Organist

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BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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TO

THE PARISH CHURCH ORGANISTS

FROM ONE OF THEM

Pisc.—These, my honest Scholar, are some Observations told to you as they now come suddenly into my Memory, of which you may make some Use; but for the practical part, it is that which makes an Angler: it is Diligence, and Observation, and Practice, and an ambition to be best in the Art, that must do it. I will tell you, Scholar, I once heard one say, "I envy not him that eats better meat than I do; nor him that is richer, or that wears better clothes than I do; I envy nobody but him, and him only, that catches more fish than I do." And such a man is like to prove an angler; and this noble emulation I wish to you and all young Anglers.

Izaak Walton.

INTRODUCTION

"Concerning men of action," said the ancient sage, "it is in the highest degree desirable that they should employ their leisure hours in pondering how they shall best shape their actions in order to achieve the ends which they set before themselves."

I think few—especially after reading this book—will deny that the activities of a "complete organist" entitle him to be called a man of action; and I am glad to seize this chance of hammering at a nail I have often tried to hit. For it is my conviction that musicians—to say nothing of other artists—neither read nor think as much as they should, and in consequence frequently fail to attain their ends from the lack of consideration as to how they shall best shape their actions for the purpose. If the definition of artistic taste so often quoted—that it is "thought guiding feeling"—is as true as it seems to me to be, it needs but little insight to explain the riotous condition of so much modern art. For with no guiding hand at the helm, nothing but a miracle can bring any ship to port.

The author of this book requires, I am sure, no introduction from me to his audience, for he is one of a small group that has deserved and received the gratitude of all those who, whether for pleasure

or of necessity, habitually read the musical press. Some of these can remember the black days when the pathetic puerilities of Chorley and Davison represented musical criticism at the lowest depth it has ever touched; others, of my own generation, still shudder when they recall the windy vapourings and the illiterate bigotry of some later writers. But at last there has dawned a day when we can, if we desire, find musical literature in abundance, well written, thoughtful, and so suggestive that we are enticed down side-avenues of thinking on our own account, in just such a manner as would have gratified the old philosopher whose words I have quoted.

And is there anyone who does not know that the banner of one of these Knights of Rescue bears the name of Harvey Grace?

PERCY C. BUCK.

HARROW,
September, 1920.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE basis of this book is a series of articles published in *The Musical Times*, from September, 1913, to March, 1915, entitled "The Compleat Organist."

On their conclusion there were many requests for a reprint in book form, but the idea was put aside indefinitely owing to the war. When in 1919 it was suggested that I should contribute to this series a book on the work of the parish church organist, I naturally turned to the articles for a nucleus of the projected volume. Entirely new matter would have called for a fresh title, and there were obvious advantages in retaining that with which the articles had been associated.

About one half of the chapters in this book are drawn from the articles and revised; the remainder are either recastings of articles, or have been specially written.

The dialogue form has been retained in a few cases where its aptness for the direct and simple exposition of conflicting views seemed to make it worth while.

The open letter to a deputy organist was written in 1917, when hundreds of inexperienced players, mostly very old or very young, were pressed into service. Deputies, however, are always in demand, so the letter has been reprinted, with a few modifications.

The revival of interest in plain-song is so marked, and its influence on some modern composers so

pronounced that no organist can afford to neglect the subject. As its treatment, either historically or practically, demands far more than a mere chapter, the reader is referred to the growing number of excellent books by experts. It seemed worth while, however, to include a discussion of some familiar arguments against the revival of this ancient music. The substance of this chapter was a paper read before the Church Music Society in 1915.

"A Duologue concerning his Instrument" is for the benefit of players who may need powder and shot wherewith to reply to some of the stock objections urged against the organ.

Some overlapping will be noticed. This could have been avoided, but only with loss to the structure of certain chapters. Moreover, the repetition is more apparent than real, for it will generally be found that the duplicate conclusions have been reached from different angles.

When the articles were commenced, the title, "The Compleat Organist," was chosen in order to justify the occasional use of dialogue and a somewhat discursive style. As such free-and-easy methods (however suitable for use in a periodical) are unusual in a textbook, some modifications seemed to be called for, but I have made no sweeping changes in this respect. After all, the work of a parish church organist is peculiarly rich on the human and social side, and a book on the subject would lose much, and gain little, by being cold-blooded and detached.

On the score of completeness, the work inevitably suffers from the fact that it attempts to cover

practically the whole of an organist's duties, with the result that some subjects—*e.g.* choir training and accompaniment—receive only a few chapters instead of the volumes they demand. It is to be hoped that the bibliography will put the reader in the way of easily supplementing this necessarily brief treatment.

We may be sure that Izaak Walton knew well that even the most careful reading of his book would leave anglers incomplete. Even while he was passing the proof sheets some Brother of the Angle probably discovered a new and highly attractive species of worm, or invented an improved hook, or hit on a new way of impaling the former on the latter. But Izaak had chosen a good title, and wisely stuck to it, although he knew it said the thing which was not.

Similarly, the author of the present work is under no delusion as to its deficiencies and its liability to be speedily put out of date in some respects. Thus, since most of it was written, there are signs that the position of the organist is likely to be improved by the demand for good players in picture theatres. Whatever we may think of this new field of work, and much as we may regret that any of our profession should feel disposed to forsake one of the most ancient and honourable of musical offices for one that has yet to prove its right to be taken seriously, we may congratulate ourselves that this demand for good players cannot fail to rouse the Church to the need for putting her musical directors in a position so secure, both as to finance and tenure, that those who transfer their services to the

cinema will do so from taste rather than from necessity.

Again, it seems likely that the musical policy of our parish churches will be changed during the next few years. The general demand for shorter services cannot be satisfied by brevity in the pulpit. There must be brevity in the choir stalls as well, especially as the call seems to be for services not only shorter but also simpler and more congregational. It will be a disaster if this leads to a lowering of the standard of efficiency on the part of our choirs. We shall probably find the situation met by more or less regular series of extra-liturgical services at which the performance of organ and choral music will be the chief feature.

It is probable, too, that country parishes and poor town churches will more and more adopt the mixed choir, with gain on both the musical and social side, and a considerable saving of expense.

Finally, the last prop is knocked away from the title of the book by the fact that the work of a cathedral organist has, for obvious reasons, not been dealt with. Yet, indirectly, the subject has been handled, for although it is highly probable that a cathedral organist with no other training and experience would fail if called on to grapple with the peculiar difficulties of a parish church, it is pretty certain that a parish church organist who had done his job well would quickly develop into a success at a cathedral. In fact, just as every private carries a field-marshal's baton in his knapsack, so every well-equipped parish church organist is a possible cathedral organist. When our deans and chapters

learn wisdom, and fill their organ lofts from the ranks of experienced men of this type (even if they have reached the great age of forty), instead of demanding young, brilliant, and inexperienced articled pupils, we shall be able to change the word "possible" into "probable."

CHAPTER I

PÆAN

It is customary to speak of the organist as the "General Practitioner of Music." The title is an honourable one, and does no more than justice to a profession that has always been singularly rich in all-round and resourceful musicians. Indeed, so large a proportion of organists are now doing work of distinction outside their organ loft that "General Practitioner" might very often be changed to "Admirable Crichton."

No other musician does so many things simultaneously as the organist, except perhaps the itinerant minstrel—now almost extinct—who delighted our young ears—and eyes—by playing together the pan-pipes, big drum, cymbals, triangle, bells, and concertina.

Lecturing at Manchester in 1912 on "The Scope of an Organist's Work," Professor H. P. Allen began by a quotation from Gesner, Rector of the Thomasschule at Leipzig in Bach's day. The passage occurs in a note to Gesner's edition of Quintilian's *Institutiones Oratoriæ*, and refers to Quintilian's remarks on the cithara player (who "pronounced words, sang notes, played an accompaniment on his instrument, and beat time with his foot") as an example of man's ability to do several things at once. Gesner's

note is worth quotation for its enthusiasm and picturesqueness :

"All these feats, O Fabius, thou wouldst say were of very little account, if it were given thee to re-cross the Styx and see Bach—to mention him specially, because he was, not so long ago, my colleague at the Thomasschule at Leipsic—working with both hands and all his fingers, either at our harpsichord, which embraces many citharas in one, or at that instrument of instruments, the organ, whose innumerable pipes are fed by bellows, and with hands going one way and hurrying feet the other, draws forth whole troops, so to speak, of the most diverse yet mutually agreeing sounds : him, I say, couldst thou see doing what several cithara-players and six hundred pipers would not effect, and, besides, keeping all in order about him, and of thirty or forty musicians, recalling one to time and accent by a nod, another by a stamp of the foot, a third by a menacing finger, giving to each performer his note, now at the top, now at the bottom, now in the middle of his own voice ; and this one man, in the midst of the loudest fortissimo, and though his individual task is the hardest of all, yet instantly perceiving if anything is wrong and where it is wrong, and keeping all in order, and always on the alert, and checking the first tendencies towards unsteadiness, with the rhythm incarnate in every limb of his body, seizing on every harmony with acute ear, and singing every part within the narrow compass of his own voice. I am, in general, a great lover of antiquity, but I hold that my friend Bach, *and any one who should be like him,*

contains within himself many Orpheuses and twenty Arions."

"Anyone who should be like him." There are a good many organists to-day who may fairly claim that the description applies no less to them than to Bach. The organist who accompanies a big modern piece of Church music may even have more to do than Bach. Often he is playing from a piano arrangement of an orchestral score, and has to further rearrange the music by reproducing a proportion of the orchestral features, at the same time making the accompaniment an effective piece of organ music. Only those who have ever done this, or watched a skilful organist doing it, realise the amount of musicianship and technical ability required. Here a passage has to be simplified, there elaborated. Figures effective on strings or piano, but mere waste on the organ, have to be translated into a new idiom. A piano accompaniment of this kind is usually all top and bottom, with both treble and bass frequently going outside the compass of the organ manuals and pedals. These extremes have to be adapted or pruned, and the blank middle of the score filled in with the harmonic basis usually supplied by the wind instruments of the orchestra. This work is frequently done from memory, or with the aid of a few pencilled indications. When it is remembered that the man who is doing it is not merely playing the notes, but also constantly changing stops and working on three (sometimes four) manuals and pedals, and at the same time not only accompanying but also directing the singers,

it will be agreed that no other musician has to be so versatile.

Nor is this all. In many cases the organ is either in a gallery or on a lofty screen, while the singers are on the ground floor. An organist whose console is high above or far off from his choir has to allow for the fact, especially in rapid and complex music. He has a further complication when his organ is divided, and (as too frequently happens) the swell is appreciably slower of speech than the rest of the instrument. Moreover, his singers are not grouped like an ordinary choral body, but are in two double rows, with anything from six to twelve yards between them.

That such obstacles to balance and unanimity are successfully overcome in so many cases is due to the resourcefulness and all-round ability of a body of musicians who, because they cut no brilliant figure on the concert platform, are too often underrated. The critic in the pew, who sniffs and compares the ensemble of the choir with that of a choral society (conveniently massed, singing to a beat, and accompanied by well-defined tones of such rhythmical instruments as strings or piano), should not be satisfied with comparing the results. He should begin by comparing the conditions under which the music is made. This done, he will sniff no longer, but will take off his hat to the organist.

Let the critic remember, too, that the parish church organist is very much at the mercy of his material. His men are usually volunteers, though if his choir fund be affluent he may sometimes pay a couple of soloists anything from ten to

twenty pounds a year. The boys receive a sum far smaller than enterprising youngsters can easily earn by running errands, cleaning boots and knives, or selling papers.

In the case of the men he may maintain something like a steady standard, but his boys must inevitably be constantly varying in excellence, especially if his church be in a poor district. Thus, six months ago he had an excellent lot of boys. During the past month two or three of his best have lost their singing voices, and one or two others have left the neighbourhood, or have started work of a kind that will prevent their attendance at practice. At the same time the supply of good recruits has somehow dried up, and a very lean time is ahead. There is no more disheartening experience than this, and it is one that every parish church organist has to go through from time to time. The congregation know nothing of the difficulties. They know only that the singing is not so good as it was six months ago, that the boys are falling off in number and quality, and they readily suppose that the choirmaster is lazy, or is deficient in attractive power and discipline. When the boys' singing is first-rate, it is the result of an expenditure of skill and managing power that few of the congregation realise. The most promising boy-voice, if not properly trained, easily develops into a raucous noise. Of the less promising, which too often makes up the bulk of the material at hand, it can only be said that the organist who produces at least a pleasant tone and a good level of competency has gone farther than most musicians in the magical process of making a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

Because he is so frequently up against difficulties—awkward relative position of organ and choir, eccentric acoustics of the church, rearranging and transposing accompaniments, wrestling with constantly fluctuating choir material, and so forth—the experienced organist develops into a handyman who is rarely beaten by circumstances. Mr Bernard Shaw is not in the habit of ladling out praise, and his tribute to the profession is therefore of special value. In his "Reminiscences of a Quinquagenarian," an address delivered before the Musical Association in 1910, he spoke of the all-round ability of musical conductors in theatres. During the discussion he added: "A real omission I made was in speaking of the theatrical conductors as the only musicians. I should have mentioned another class of practical men—the church organists." This is a bouquet that may fairly be set against the gibes of a section of musical journalists who seem to think the church organist is necessarily a dull dog. Sometimes he is, but the organ loft has no monopoly in dull dogs: they are not unknown in other branches of the musical profession. And even in the mere handful of musical critics an astonishingly wide distance separates the brilliant from the other kind.

Of the organist's influence on the musical life of the community there is need to say little, the facts being too obvious to escape notice. He is usually the centre of the musical life of the village or town, conducting the local choral society (usually with no other payment than the chance of gaining a few pupils from its ranks); giving lessons on all sorts of subjects (sometimes with slender qualifications, but

there is nobody on the spot better able to do it, and after all, a man must live); training generation after generation of boys, and so influencing the taste of the men of the future; giving his congregation, through his voluntaries and recitals, a steady stream of music of a type far superior to any they hear elsewhere; and annually getting through an amount of good music beside which the repertory of many a successful soloist of the concert-room looks small.

With the remarkable developments in modern organ building has come a level of technique far superior to that of the past generation, when heavy touch and clumsy mechanism made organ playing a matter of brawn rather than brain. Side by side with the new technique has arrived a new idiom in the music written for the instrument. The day when organ music was expected to be a mixture of big chords, suspensions, and polyphony has gone. These constituents will never be obsolete, because they are those through which the characteristics of the organ are well expressed. But they now gain in impressiveness by being alternated with writing of a type that would have been impracticable a quarter of a century ago—keyboard work that has so far been regarded as suitable to the pianoforte, and with which the organist of the old heavy-touch organ would have as a rule been able to do little. The well-equipped organist of to-day is therefore at least a fair pianist, because now, more than ever before, the foundation of a good organ technique must be laid at the pianoforte.

Even more important is the fact that an increasing number of organists now prepare for the

choral side of their work by studying singing under qualified teachers. Not many years ago the average organist was so ignorant of the right use of the singing voice that his attempts at patterning to his choir and choral society were an infliction on his hearers and a danger to his own vocal organs. The very term "organist's voice" was a byword. The complete organist may have neither the voice nor the temperament to fit him for public singing, but he knows the subject well enough to be on sure ground in dealing with the voices of others, and his study of singing has taught him more about accompaniment than he could learn from any textbook—though he will read these all the same.

As a body, organists are second to none in their knowledge of what is misleadingly called the theoretical side of music. I say "misleadingly," because a good working acquaintance of harmony and free counterpoint is surely among the severely practical parts of a musician's outfit. Yet of all instrumentalists only the organist as a rule gets beyond the elementary stage. It is a common experience at local concerts to hear a brilliant pianist going up like a rocket with a dashing solo, and coming down like a stick when called on to play the National Anthem a little later. The local organist may have no showy piano solo at his finger-ends, but he can be depended on to supply a decent harmonisation of a simple melody at a moment's notice.

The layman who wishes to complete the catalogue of jobs to which the organist can readily turn his hand should overhaul a batch of examination papers for the Fellowship diploma of the Royal College of

Organists. He will soon see that although some other musicians go farther along certain roads, the organist covers a good deal more of the map. His feet are at home on most of the highways, and he generally manages to explore a few byways as well.

Why this pæan?

For two reasons: first, because so few people realise the scope of an organist's work; second, in order that he may be encouraged to hold his head higher. It is partly his own fault that he and his work are so frequently undervalued. He is like other musicians in being well aware of his individual ability, but he is too often deficient in the only kind of pride that does not go before a fall—pride in his profession.

What musician can point to a nobler lineage? Try to figure to yourself the history of our art without the Church musicians—the Bachs and nearly all the early polyphonists and keyboard writers, Palestrina, Vittoria, Tallis, Gibbons, Byrd, the Wesleys, Franck—a complete list would give us a fair sketch of the progress of music down to the beginning of the modern era, with not a few outstanding names in more recent times.

A goodly heritage, with great responsibilities—enough to make the meekest proud and the vainest humble.

CHAPTER II

PASTORS AND MASTERS

THE bad old days when it was almost taken for granted that vicar and organist should live in a state of more or less desultory warfare are happily past, and are never likely to return. This improvement in their relations is due to changes in both parties. The clergy are far more democratic, and therefore able to regard the organist as a colleague rather than as a specially fractious type of underling. They realise that a capable organist and a well-managed choir, with their vitalising effect on the popular side of the Church services, are auxiliaries far too valuable to be snubbed. On the organist's side, too, an improvement has taken place. As a result of the increased esteem in which the musical profession is now held, a better all-round type of man is attracted to its ranks, and Church music has shared with other branches of the profession in this improved *personnel* —not quite so fully as might be wished, for the practical reason that salaries have been low and the position too often insecure. This last point will be considered fully later on.

On the whole, then, the vicar and organist of to-day work together far better than did their predecessors of twenty years ago. Nevertheless from time to time ecclesiastical and musical journals contain bursts of querulous correspondence, showing

that there still remain far too many points on which disagreement is fatally easy. Thus, a Church newspaper will for a few weeks contain letters from clergy complaining of organists, organs, and choirs—letters in which the word "tyranny" will serve as a kind of leitmotiv. At another time we find the musical journals running a correspondence in which organists complain of high-handed vicars. This method of airing grievances is of very little use, as the contending parties rarely hear the other side. Only a smallish proportion of organists are regular readers of the *Church Times* or *Guardian*, and an even smaller number of the clergy are subscribers to a musical journal. Moreover, complaints in the Press are likely to be futile because the difficulties are in most cases purely local and personal, and can therefore be understood only by those on the spot.

Very often the trouble would be ended by a quiet chat, pipe in mouth. Nowhere does misunderstanding thrive more than in parishes where the vicar and organist rarely or never meet save when on duty. On the other hand, you will usually find the best of relations existing in cases where the organist is thoroughly at home at the vicarage supper-table or in the vicar's study.

What are the most frequent causes of contention? More often than not the matter is one respecting the choice of music, especially hymn tunes. It is, of course, very trying to a musician to be asked to play at children's and mission services tunes of a tawdry and debased type. His vicar thinks that such tunes make a service attractive, and no other consideration has much weight with him. Too often

the organist takes the wrong line. He declines to play the tunes, or plays them under protest, and he will complain to his choir, and make satirical references to the clergy in general and his vicar in particular. Having thus undone (in the matter of discipline) the choir work of months, he will set forth in a letter to a musical journal excellent reasons against the use of such tunes—a letter which, as we have seen, is hardly likely to meet his vicar's eye, and therefore is of no use.

The complete organist does none of these things. He will make an appointment with his vicar, and will proceed to administer the word in season. As this question of choice of music is always more or less in the air, I propose to go into it rather more fully than the title of this chapter warrants. It is, as was said above, one of the most frequent causes of friction between organist and vicar. It may be useful to summarise a few quite simple and obvious arguments on the organist's side which are not so often brought before the clergy as they should be. I shall consider the question principally in relation to hymn tunes. *Mutatis mutandis*, the arguments apply to all other inferior Church music.

The parties having come together, and the pipe of peace having been produced, the proceedings will run on the following lines:—

C.O.—My dear Vicar, you are so accustomed to deal faithfully with your flock, that I hope you will allow one who, though an official, is still one of them, to do the like with you. We are at cross purposes over the use of mission and other unworthy types of hymn tunes. I am going to put before you the

musical side of the question, that being the only one on which I have the right to speak. I object to these tunes, as I would to shoddy anthems or services, not because I or the choir dislike them, but simply on the ground of their not being good enough for use in church.

V.—But that's just the point! I don't want elaborate music. I want something simple and bright, so that the service shall be hearty and go with a swing.

C.O.—There you follow the bulk of the cloth in supposing that good music is necessarily elaborate. Good music may be quite simple, and simple music quite good. But there is more than one kind of simplicity—there is that of the genius, and that of the idiot. So in music you have on one hand an old psalm tune such as "St Ann's," or "Dundee," and on the other the revivalist type of tune. Both kinds are simple, especially the old tunes, but there can be no question as to which kind is good. What is needed in the parish church is the good, simple thing done well—the good, strong hymn tune, versicle, and chant well sung. So much for the "elaborate" bogey. Then you demand that the service shall be "hearty." By that you mean it must be loud.

V.—Well—I didn't really—er—aren't you rather crude?

C.O.—Precisely! It is not a case for subtleties, but facts; and facts are crude. You, as well as ninety per cent. of your fellow-clerics, mean "loud" when you say "hearty." Now, your Nuttall, conveniently at hand, tells me that "hearty" means

"proceeding from the heart; full of heart; with heart; healthy; strong; having a keen appetite"—nothing about "proceeding from the lungs," you will notice. Good congregational singing, I agree, may well be loud and strong, but the loudness is nothing in itself. It is a mere by-product. To prove the absurdity of this fetish of noise, I need only to remind you that of all choral effects the most thrilling is a real *pianissimo* by a big choir. So much for your heartiness. Then you demand that a service shall be "bright," and shall "go with a swing." Now I do not desire, any more than you do, that the service on its musical side shall hang fire. But I must point out that again much depends upon what we mean by our terms. There is tremendous swing about an old psalm tune or chorale sung with proper breadth and weight. There is also swing—our less expensive Press is fond of calling it "vim" and "verve"—about most of our popular music-hall songs. But you will not want that particular variety in church; at all events, I hope not. And in this matter of "brightness and swing" I am going to risk your anger by pointing out that we do not find the clergy as a body feverishly anxious to make *their* part of the service conspicuous for these qualities. Instead, we have too often slovenly reading of the lessons and prayers, and careless intoning; and as for the pulpit part, I have even known a cleric to be overtaken, like Bully Bottom, with "an exposition of sleep" during a sermon by one of his colleagues. A clerical demand for "brightness and swing" is likely to come home to roost in many churches!

Coming now to the actual matter in dispute—mission hymns—let me put before you a few points. You have asked me to include some of them because a certain percentage of the congregation will like them. Most of our other hymns, you say, are too severe, though you admit their excellence. Now, I am going to reply by making a few suggestions. We are justly proud of our beautiful parish church, but I have long felt that many of the poorer people of our district do not fully appreciate its architectural excellences. How should they? Fine architecture, especially of the ecclesiastical type, repels rather than attracts the uneducated mind. It is too severe, too much outside their everyday experience. Take them to the Hipposeum or some other mammoth place of amusement, and they will feel quite at home, and will remark on the beauty of the building. If you canvassed your congregation, you would find that to seventy-five per cent. the Hipposeum, as a mere building, gives more pleasure than our church. Then why not make such structural alterations as shall bring our grand Norman pile into line with popular taste? This argument, if it errs at all, does so on the side of mercy, for the Hipposeum is a good building for its purpose and of its kind, whereas the hymn tunes by which you set such store are bad both in kind and quality. Their use is as much an offence to the musician as the painting of our oak choir-stalls with stripes of red, white, and blue would be to you. Yet no doubt a considerable percentage of our congregation would think the carving vastly improved with some such scheme of decoration. In vain would you quote the line about "painting the

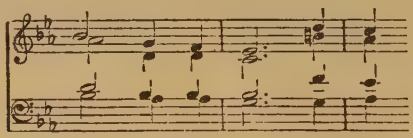
lily." They prefer it painted, regarding it otherwise as a tame and chilling bloom. When I find you decorating the church to suit their taste, you will hear no protest from me in the matter of hymn tunes.

V. But who is to decide that these tunes are bad? Surely it is a matter of taste, about which there can be no argument.

C.O. I grant that it is not always an easy thing to decide, especially in the case of the numerous examples that hover near the border line. But how do we decide in other arts? In a dispute as to what constitutes a good book, you will consider the opinion of a dozen literary men of standing worth that of ten times the number of the ordinary reading public. Nor, in the matter of pictures, do you hang on the walls of your church or vicarage crude oleographs or cheap prints such as you find in the poorer homes of your parish. Many of your parishioners would thank you less for a fine etching than for a highly coloured print in which the bluest of policemen and the reddest of soldiers are seen ogling the most apple-cheeked of housemaids. Most educated people are quite clear as to the difference between the good and bad in literary and pictorial art. In music, the distinction is equally clear to all who have received a musical training worth the name. They, surely, should be arbiters enough for you. Do you realise, too, that music has its grammar—a code of rules as definite in most cases as those governing language? You would be horrified if I suggested that the choir should sing a hymn, the first lines of which ran:

> "I is a awful sinner,
> And you be just the same."

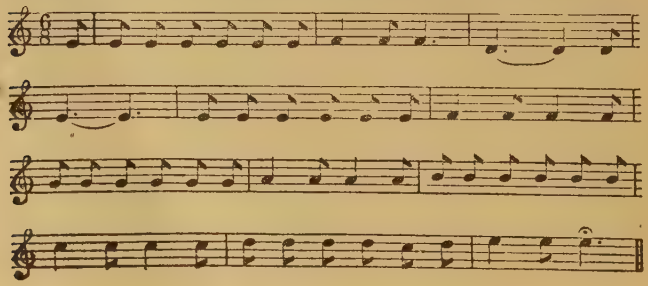
You would point out that although the lines contain a statement about which there can be no dispute, the diction is so crude, and the grammar so hopeless as to render the hymn unfit for use, and I should agree with you. Do you know that most hymn tunes of the popular type contain breaches of musical grammar quite as excruciating to a musician as the above lines are to you? I open one of these books (the Mirfield Mission Hymn Book) and find this progression:



This brief passage contains more mistakes in grammar than the two lines of our imaginary hymn. The rules broken are founded on practical common-sense, as you will find if you ask your choir to sing the "harmony."

If you defend such tunes on the score of melodiousness, I can easily point to some that are popular, but which, judged as melodies, carry their poverty on their face.

Here, for example, is a succession of notes from the refrain of another tune in the same collection:



After the pause on the top note, the "tune" ambles back in pretty much the way it went up, reminding one of the exploit of the famous general who, after gallantly marching up the hill, marched down again. Nothing happened on the way up, or down, or at the top.

You set great store by these tunes for use at children's services. It may be worth while pointing out that our children in elementary schools now learn, as a rule, songs that musically are of a far more satisfactory type. Are we wise in encouraging them to believe that what would not be tolerated by the London County Council is good enough for the Church? Try to look at the matter in this light. If you still think that the attractive power is the only consideration that matters, be consistent, and let us have a rainbow-striped lectern, the architecture and lighting arrangements of the Hipposeum, and let a committee of clergy who agree with you give us a paraphrase of the Bible and Prayer Book with the noblest of English exchanged for the much more understandable and popular language of the evening paper.

The above is a monologue rather than a discussion, because, as there is no defence for the use of really bad music in church, there is no vicar's side to the question.

He gets a much better innings when some other matters come up for discussion. Thus, all the reason is on his side when he finds it necessary to suggest that unduly elaborate music is making the services

too long. An organist with a capable and enthusiastic choir will naturally feel sore when asked to drop some long anthem or service-setting popular with the singers. He will do well to remember, however, that the popularity of such works is frequently confined to the choir. The average member of the congregation is no more fond of long performances in the choir-stalls than in the pulpit. All the signs of to-day point to a general desire for a shortening of the service. We organists are among the warmest advocates of brief sermons—ten minutes is the time we suggest as ideal, regarding anything beyond as an annoying interruption of our performances. If services are to be reduced in length, organists and choirs must be prepared to make the necessary sacrifice. As a matter of fact, it need as a rule be only a very slight one. A little commonsense in the arrangement of the monthly music list will enable us to retain all our repertory. On occasions when a long anthem is to be sung, we should compromise by singing the canticles to chants or to a setting that takes very little more time. If we sing a long setting of the canticles we may forgo the anthem. A very long setting of the Communion Service should be used in instalments. There is usually no thematic connection between the movements, and even if there be, we need have no scruple in doing to such works what is now frequently done to classical symphonies. Indeed, there is usually a gain in the resultant mixture of styles, provided all be equally good. A small repertory may be made to go a long way by such means, just as a man with but two decent suits of clothes may, by skilfully

ringing the changes on these few garments, appear to possess an extensive wardrobe.

Too often, however, the organist resents his vicar's request for shorter music, regards it as meddlesome discouragement, and acts in a way calculated to cause unpleasantness all round. Here is a case I heard of recently. The organist, very fond of the lengthy masses of Schubert, Mozart, Haydn, etc., was asked to substitute a short setting of such parts of the service as the Sanctus and Agnus Dei. To this very reasonable request he replied by choosing the dullest setting he could find, and putting it on the service list for months at a stretch, until complaints flew thick and fast. As a result, a small matter that ought to have been settled in a friendly way by a few minutes' chat with his vicar became a *casus belli* between choir and clergy, with the congregation taking sides in due course.

A very fruitful cause of trouble is the behaviour of choir boys during the service, when the organist is usually ignorant of what goes on. A complaint from the clergy is rarely taken in good part, the organist acting as if he regarded it as a reflection on his disciplinary methods. Nothing is worse for the *moral* of a choir than neglect to back up the clergy in such cases. On the other hand, it may sometimes be necessary to remind the complainant that occasional lapses of the kind are inevitable, even among the best-managed sets of boys. The most fatal mistake the organist can make, however, is to wink at bad behaviour merely because the culprit has a good voice. There must be the same law for the solo boy as for the duffer, even though

a few weeks' suspension of a fine singer may make havoc of our music list. This goes without saying, but it cannot be denied that organists as a body fail in this matter of elementary justice, and the failure has disastrous effects on the choir and on the relations between organist and clergy.

The power to punish, and especially to suspend, must be in the hands of the organist alone, and he will do well to make the fact clear from the first. Otherwise he will find the clergy sending a boy from the vestry, or even from the choir-stalls during a service. All these matters will stand a good chance of amicable settlement if vicar and organist will discuss them in a frank but friendly way.

Asked to choose between musical and unmusical vicars, most organists would probably prefer the latter. They are less likely to interfere with the choir work, whereas the former, whose claim to musicianship usually rests upon the slenderest foundation, will rush in and wallow out of their depth on every possible occasion. In such a case, the organist must point out, courteously but unmistakably, that if the clergy and churchwardens consider he is able to do his work, he must be allowed to do it. If not, he must go. There would be very few cases in which a thoroughly capable man would be allowed to go.

Although the organist has but one pastor, his masters are many. He will find no lack of members of the congregation willing—even eager—to give him advice. Men who would hesitate before committing themselves to a criticism of architecture, painting, or literature, have no such backwardness where

Church music is concerned. It is quite sufficient for them that such and such a detail of the service is not pleasing to them. It rarely occurs to them that the deficiency may be, not in the music, but in their own taste. The wise organist will rarely argue with these critics from the nave. Argument is difficult, because the common ground on which the disputants can meet is the merest pinpoint in area. He will listen with the courtesy due to one who perhaps subscribes a half-guinea towards his salary, and when the other (a successful business man, let us say) has finished, he will quite pleasantly remark: "Anything in your suggestion that is worthy consideration shall have it, I promise you. As one good turn deserves another, I propose to call at your office shortly to give you my views on book-keeping or some other matter connected with your business. I feel sure there must be many points on which a musician can suggest improvements." The discussion will end, at once, in quite a friendly way, and there are not likely to be any more criticisms from that quarter. In extreme cases, it may be necessary to point out that the deficiency may be in the critic himself rather than in the music. He may be reminded (again pleasantly) of the old saying that if a man raps himself on the head with a book, and hears a hollow sound, he must not hastily assume that there is nothing in the book. At the same time, while the organist must have the courage of his opinions, and maintain the dignity of his office, there are certain matters in which he should not merely welcome criticism and suggestions, but even ask for them. From his position at the console, it often

happens that he is the least able of all present to hear the effect he is producing. There are in every congregation at least a few people whose musical knowledge and taste are sufficient to make their opinion of value, and the wise organist will from time to time seek their advice on such matters as balance between organ and choir.

Nothing will test the organist's tact more than an attempt to reform the musical arrangements in a parish where the standard has been low. He must make haste slowly, compromising here, tacking there, but all the while making a little headway. He must not expect his choir and congregation to arrive in one bound at a standard of taste that he himself has reached only after long training. This blunder is often made. People can be no more dragooned into refinement than into righteousness. Let the organist go delicately to work in superseding a favourite hymn tune, no matter how superior the new one may be. Nothing rouses the man in the pew more than such a change. A law-abiding citizen, a mild man all the week, he becomes a very Berserker on the Sunday if you defraud him of a tune he has sung from boyhood. He will not care how bad it was, or how good the new one is. Such changes must come, but the tactful organist will find a way to bring them about with a minimum of annoyance all round. In such a case as the one just mentioned, for example, the solution is found in congregational practices (by means of which a new tune gets a fair start, instead of being shot at the congregation during a service), and in the alternate use, for a time, of both old and new tunes. The excellences of

the new will have a chance to make their appeal, and the comparison between the two will inevitably end in the majority of the congregation preferring the better. In these and many kindred difficulties, the organist will save himself endless worry and unpleasantness if he will constantly try to get the point of view of the congregation. He will do his work better, and in the long run get his own way oftener. To attempt a reform at one fell swoop is as mad a proceeding as a cricketer's attempt to score a century in his first few overs. In building up a choir, or founding a good tradition, it is the long game that pays.

CHAPTER III

THE ORGANIST'S POSITION

In Chapter II. mention was made of the insecurity of the organist's post. It has long been a grievance that he is liable to be dismissed on the very slenderest grounds: the advent of a new incumbent, a falling off in parochial funds, failure to see eye to eye with a "musical" vicar, a demand for a simpler service or for a more elaborate one—the reasons are as plentiful as blackberries.

In July, 1917, the Royal College of Organists presented a petition to the Archbishops, asking that organists who felt themselves to be unjustly treated in this way should have the right to place their case before the Bishop of the Diocese or before some recognised judicial tribunal empowered by the Archbishops to act in conjunction with the Diocesan. In November of the same year the Archbishop of Canterbury received a deputation from the College, Dr Shinn and other speakers putting the organists' case in detail. The Archbishop embodied his reply in a letter to the Honorary Secretary of the College (Dr Harding), his only practical suggestion being that the desired security of tenure might be gained through the Parish Councils which were to be established under the Church of England Assembly Act then being drafted.

The R.C.O. Committee, in reply, pointed out that

this throwing of the onus on to the Parochial Council would be likely to create division and discord in a parish, and so make things worse rather than better.[1] Presumably the College Council a few years later thought differently, for recently (15th March 1920) they issued a memorandum suggesting that every organist should attend the meeting of the Parish Council of the church at which he holds office, and propose the following resolution :—

"That the Organist and Choirmaster shall be appointed by the Vicar and Churchwardens, acting jointly, but shall not be compelled to relinquish his appointment except at the request of the Vicar, the Churchwardens, and the Parish Church Council."

As the Archbishops apparently could not see their way to adopting the much better plan suggested in the petition, there seems to be no other alternative than this resolution, the proposition of which, however, would come more fittingly from some person other than the organist himself.

In this as in other cases of difficulty between employer and employed the strong sense of justice at the back of public opinion will in the long run decide the issue. Thanks to the amount of publicity given to the organist's case, in the daily Press as well as in the musical journals, lay interest has been sufficiently roused to make the clergy a good deal less prone to hasty action than they were a few years ago.

[1] For a copy of the petition, a report of the deputation, and the subsequent correspondence, the reader is referred to the 1918-1919 *Calendar of the Royal College of Organists*.

Until the subject was thus thoroughly ventilated, there was a tendency among the public to regard an organist's dismissal as the ordinary risk to which most employees are exposed. Few seemed to realise that only a very small proportion of his earnings resulted directly from his appointment, and that a reasonable income was rarely gained until he had laboriously built up a teaching connection—the work of some years in most cases. It may be asked: "Why need he leave the neighbourhood on being dismissed from a post that usually carried with it but a small salary? Why not stay on and continue to develop his teaching practice?"

For two good reasons he usually prefers to make a fresh start elsewhere. First, most of his clients are amongst the congregation, and the loss of his post invariably means the drying up of a steady source of work. His old pupils would probably stick to him, but as in due course of time their lessons ceased, there would be few new pupils to take their place, because the congregation of a church very naturally support their organist for the time being.

Second, there is likely to be unpleasantness in a parish where both the new organist and his predecessor are in practice, especially if there is any feeling that the latter has been badly treated. His old friends in choir and congregation will be inclined to express their loyalty to him by showing a certain amount of antagonism to the new-comer.

The dismissed organist, as a rule, prefers not to remain as a kind of storm centre. He has, or should have, no grudge against his successor, and, moved by a desire for peace and quietness, and a sense of

fair play, he takes his departure. This is a hardship in any case. It is a calamity when, as so frequently happens, the victim is well past the prime of life, and has little or no financial reserve wherewith to tide over the lean time that inevitably follows a change of post.

In *The Musical Times* of November, 1917, I had the unpleasant task of giving publicity to a few typical cases of unfair dismissal. I do not repeat them here, partly through considerations of space, but even more from a reluctance to reopen old sores, or to do anything likely to lead readers to saddle on the clergy as a body the harsh actions of a few.

Moreover, there is a parson's side even to this question, and as this side, like that of the organist, has been imperfectly realised I propose to set it forth, so far as a mere layman can do so.

Here, to begin with, is a problem that sometimes meets a new incumbent. He finds an organist who has done long service, against whom nothing definite can be said on personal or musical grounds, and who exactly suits the musical taste of the congregation—which is not surprising, as he has had the forming of that taste for a good many years. Meanwhile, organist and choir (and congregation, so far as the music is concerned) have settled down into a state of complacent apathy. What is the new-comer to do? He feels that his work is not receiving the stimulus that ought to be forthcoming from the music. He can hardly accuse the organist of slackness. Ample time is spent in practices, there is no lack of technical ability, and both playing and singing are without any

considerable blemishes. But they are also without any vitalising or uplifting power. A parson who demanded that some life should be infused into things would be promptly called an interfering faddist. The choir is considered to be good; the people had been satisfied with it all these years; why should he come and begin to find fault?

Again, an incumbent may desire to alter the musical arrangements in some material way, and with good cause. He may wish to develop a service on congregational lines, or to change from plain-song to modern music, or *vice versa*. We can hardly dispute his right to make (or at least to suggest) such changes, nor can we deny that an organist who regarded clerical suggestions as necessarily impertinent, and acted accordingly, would put himself in the wrong.

Cases are not unknown in which an organist is actually incompetent, or neglects the monotonous task of choir-training in favour of the primrose path of recital work, and yet is able to command so much local support that only the boldest of vicars dare tell him that he must do his work or resign. We may easily imagine the split in the parish if in the case of a popular "slacker," the vicar said "Go," and the Church Council said "No!"

An even greater difficulty exists in the case of an organist who (not unnaturally) clings to his post when too old to do the work. There must be a fair number of vicars to-day cheerfully suffering from indifferent music because they cannot screw themselves up to thrust an old and tried servant into penury. Perhaps their compassion is founded on the comfortable

reflection that they are safe and happy possessors of a freehold.

We organists shall do well to bear these points in mind when disposed to make sweeping accusations against the clergy as a body.

No one, clerical or lay, is likely to deny that the cases of wrongful dismissal are sufficiently numerous to justify an organised protest But we shall do our cause no good by claiming that such methods are typical of more than a minority of the clergy.

It must be confessed that we can hope for nothing very definite in the way of reform. The petition referred to above asked that

"... organists who are confronted with dismissal for which they consider there are no adequate reasons, should have the right to place their case before the Bishop of the Diocese or before some recognised judicial body [empowered by the Archbishops] to act in conjunction with the Bishop, in whose decision they will feel the fullest confidence."

But supposing such appeal to be made and the organist's case upheld, what happens? Can we imagine him caring to continue his work in a parish where the incumbent tolerated his presence only because the Bishop has decided there were no good grounds for his dismissal? There may be a few truculent ones inclined to follow the example of a well-known cathedral organist who scored by playing "Fixed in his everlasting seat" on the Sunday following such a decision. But I fancy that the bulk of us, bearing in mind how much the success of our choir work depends on all-round parochial harmony,

would prefer not to be fixed in a seat which the vicar can make exceedingly uncomfortable.

Here is another quotation which shows the difficulty of a real solution:

"It is not the desire of your petitioners to make it difficult for a vicar to remove one who is undoubtedly musically inefficient or in other ways unsuitable for the position he occupies, but we urge that organists who are recognised as efficient and who carry out their duties with loyalty to the church authorities should feel that they cannot be capriciously dismissed from their post."

But, as is shown above, it is conceivable that an organist may be inefficient and yet command so much local support that it is difficult for the incumbent to dismiss him.

"... organists who are recognised as efficient ..." Recognised by whom? By the congregation? The only satisfactory test of a man's efficiency is some kind of examination by prominent members of his profession. We can hardly imagine the setting up of a kind of musical jury in such cases, but logically it is the only method of settling the point.

After all, so long as we have on the one hand an incumbent with plenary power (including the right to lock the organ), and on the other an organist who is not an absolutely necessary official (however desirable and popular an accessory), we shall be faced with a condition of things for which it is difficult to legislate. In no other case of employer and employee are tact and consideration so important.

The R.C.O. action, then, being made on behalf

of a profession which, important as it is, cannot claim to be essential, and which has no protective Union at its back, could hardly be expected to produce any definite result. But it has done much good by rousing the interest and sympathy of the public, and by drawing the attention of the clergy to some aspects of the matter that seem to have escaped them hitherto. It will do still more if it leads us organists to ask ourselves if we are always as sweetly reasonable as we might be when our pastors and masters do not see eye to eye with us. Notice to quit is usually the result of a quarrel—and a quarrel, we know, belongs to the concerto family, and requires at least two performers.

CHAPTER IV

CHOIR BOYS

PROBABLY in no part of his work has the organist the benefit of so much good counsel as in the training of choir boys. There are many excellent books on the subject, and from time to time these are supplemented by lectures and magazine articles. Yet curiously enough no one can pay a visit to a dozen churches, chosen at random, without being convinced by the painful evidence of his ears that the well-trained boy choir—that peculiarly English institution—is less common than it ought to be. It is not so much a matter of locality or material. There are churches where the cost of the choir runs into four figures, at which the boys habitually carry the chest register too high, or sing with such a defined break that responses and chanting—especially plain-song—would appear to a blindfolded hearer to be the work of a different set of boys from those singing the anthem. On the other hand, there are churches in slum districts where the boys' voices are a delight to the ear. The reverse case is the rule, of course, but there are enough of these exceptions to prove that the matter is one of skill in training rather than in choice of material. Between these two extremes are many churches where the training of the voices has been merely superficial. How is this, when so many excellent manuals on the subject have appeared?

Probably one reason is that these books are written by choirmasters in high places, where good natural voices are always forthcoming, and where there are facilities for frequent practice—in a word, everything on the material side that a wealthy congregation or liberal endowment can provide. The writers too often seem to be under the impression that other choirs will be more or less similarly well equipped. For example, from several of these textbooks I learn that the boys should stand in such an order, with music desks of a certain height, so that they may have their hands free; that for accompaniment a pianoforte should be used—preferably a grand, in order that the player may have an uninterrupted view of the class; that corporal punishment should be applied only rarely; that choir boys should never be allowed to shout at their games; that great care should be taken in choosing their diet, all harmful and indigestible foods being avoided; that they should never be allowed to eat nuts; that etc. etc. With these dicta no one is likely to disagree, but for one organist in the fortunate position of being able to carry them into practice, there are probably ninety-nine to whom most of them are necessarily a dead letter.

On the musical side these manuals provide many pages of exercises ranging from the slow scale to the trill, and from the Anglican chant to the florid aria—again all excellent, but of practical use in only a small minority of cases.

There are hundreds of organists who might say to the authors of their treatises: "Your book is interesting reading, but when I tell you the circum-

stances in which my work is done, you will see how little the book can do for me. My salary is small, so that I have to work hard at teaching to make a living. Most of my pupils want their lessons in the evening, therefore boys' practices—which must of course take place after their school hours—cannot be more than two, or, at special seasons, three, per week. Even if I could afford the time, the boys are paid such small amounts that this is as much as can reasonably be demanded of them in addition to their full practice and services. As to the type of boy, I cannot pick and choose. The better-class boys of the parish go to secondary schools, and have so many home lessons that few of them care to undertake the ties of choir work as well. I have not a waiting list of 'sons of gentlemen,' many of whom have already received instruction preparatory to the trial of voice. If a boy in my neighbourhood has a musical home, and is discovered to be the possessor of a particularly promising voice, he is not for me. He goes—I am not blaming him—to a wealthy church where there is a choir school and other advantages, or to a cathedral. I have no practice-room, with nicely appointed music library, desks, and pianoforte. My practices are held in a stuffy vestry, or in a corner of the church, with an asthmatic harmonium for accompaniment. You suggest that corporal punishment should be used only in extreme cases. I have been at St Praxed's for many years now, and have never once used corporal punishment—not because I haven't wanted to, or because I have any humanitarian prejudice against it, but for the far better reason that it would soon bring my choir to an end—

to say nothing of the extreme probability of my finding myself in the dock answering a charge of assault. You must remember that your boys get a *quid pro quo* for their work, and both they and their parents are anxious for them to be where they are. My boys, so far from receiving a *quid pro quo*, receive at the most only half-a-one per quarter. Boys swayed by financial considerations give my choir a wide berth, and earn more by selling papers or running errands. Those that come, do so because they are fond of singing, or because their parents are members of the congregation. As to their diet, I have no supervision except during practice and service times. So far as possible, I see that the food then consumed is of a light, nutritious quality, such as sweets, and the smaller and more easily negotiable forms of fruit. I find the boys willing to eschew nuts, especially the Brazilian variety, as the difficulties of silently cracking them, and tidily disposing of the shells, are wellnigh insuperable. At St Praxed's, therefore, they are used mainly as missiles. I have not yet ventured to visit the playgrounds of the half-dozen Council schools from which my boys are drawn, to protest against their shouting at their games. I doubt if my visit would be welcomed, or even allowed, by the Education Authorities. As for the admirable exercises you provide, I find that with the not too bright type of boy at my disposal, all my practice time is required for the service music—for you must remember that my boys leave school at the earliest possible date, and go to work at once, and the cases in which they are of any use to me afterwards—owing to difficulties of attending practice

—are few. Therefore I have constantly to be slaving away with young ones."

This is, I believe, a fair statement of the conditions under which many choirmasters have to do their work. The result too often is that, finding himself unable to carry out more than a very few of the recommendations of the books on choir-training, he sooner or later gives up the attempt, and allows himself to be mastered by his circumstances. The sight of dozens of pages of exercises gives him the quite erroneous impression that nothing can be done in the direction of voice-training without the expenditure of a great deal of time—more, at all events, than he can spare.

As a matter of fact, however, the responsiveness of the human voice to training is such that, while years of arduous work are required to produce the great singer, a pleasant vocal quality may be obtained by an amount of study so limited as to be negligible in the case of any other instrument. This applies with special force to boys' voices, except where they are handicapped by years of wrong methods.

For experienced choirmasters, or for those so fortunate as to be able to obtain a steady supply of good material, with ample facilities for practice, this chapter is not written. To these, it is—or should be—a carrying of coals to Newcastle. It is hoped, however, that a few simple hints from one who has had twenty-five years' experience of boy-training under most—sometimes all—of the disadvantages mentioned above may be of use to others similarly situated.

It is of course impossible in the limits of a chapter to do more than suggest lines of work. Amplifica-

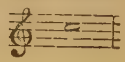
tions and developments will, however, readily suggest themselves.

The organist with few and short practices must dismiss from his mind the idea that he cannot find time for voice-training. He must remember that in this, as in other branches of teaching, it matters less *what* is done, or the length of time occupied, than *how* it is done. In vocal training, as in physical, we know that a few simple exercises, carefully and thoughtfully used, produce better results than elaborate ones merely "gone through"—these latter, indeed, so far from doing any good, are often actually harmful. So we get our first encouragement in finding that very little time is involved. Five minutes is such a modest slice of a practice to devote to this purpose that surely no choirmaster will feel he cannot spare it. Let us say, then, that the minimum should be five minutes, and the maximum fifteen.

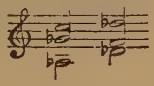
The scale and arpeggio will of course form the basis of our work. The value of the single-note exercise should not, however, be overlooked. It may always be practised with advantage, though as a rule it comes first as the most elementary study. Used in the early stages with new boys, many useful developments of it will suggest themselves.

For example, when the boys are able to sustain a note with good tone for, say, ten or twelve seconds, they may monotone short sentences, especially some constructed with a view to overcoming any local peculiarities of speech, or they may count from one to ten, being first told that this particular exercise is a fourfold one, requiring management of

breath, pure tone, sustaining of pitch, and good enunciation. They will take all the more trouble if they can be got to regard it as a time-saving exercise. I have found this counting on a note one of the most useful of all exercises, especially in the case of small boys in the early stages of chanting. Later, the number counted may be increased to twenty-four. Used fairly rapidly, it becomes a capital study in enunciation. Slow and soft, it is of course a valuable study in breath control. Not the least of its advantages is its simplicity, and the fact that every boy may begin it at once, no copies or preliminary teaching being required.

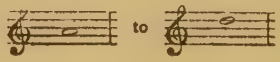
The scale is best practised downwards in the case of boys with rough voices. Commence at such a pitch that the use of the head register is natural, and let the descent be *diminuendo*. The pace should be slow at first, and need never be more than moderate. Usually the scale may be started at  rising by semitones to The scales should be linked by a modulating chord, and a convenient arrangement will be to allow two beats between each scale, the boys being instructed to take a deep breath in the interval.

Instruction books usually give the dominant chord only, with or without a pause. The addition of the tonic during the rest gives the boys an opportunity of mentally singing the note before attacking it vocally. They should be instructed to do this from the first. Again, the provision of two beats' rest ensures ample

time for deep breathing. Teach the boys to associate the connecting chords  with the words "deep breath," mentally spoken in time with the chords. The habit of deep breathing at a rest is thus formed. Be on the watch to see that no breath is emitted before the note. Boys will sometimes take a deep breath, waste part of it, and start the ensuing passage with an insufficient supply. The boys should stand easily, with the hands lightly resting on the lower ribs, and should breathe deeply enough for a slight movement of the ribs to be felt. Without some such arrangement as this, they will content themselves with their usual casual and insufficient breathing.

Although the descending scale is of special importance in extending the head register downwards and so smoothing over the break, it is well not to practise this form only. In the service music passages founded on the ascending scale will be quite as numerous as the reverse, and usually more difficult. Moreover, they offer a trap in the matter of forcing up the lower register. These passages can be prepared for only by careful practice of ascending scales. As to the vowel sounds to be used, of course all should have their turn, with a preference for *o*, *ah* and *ee*. The sound *oo* is too often regarded as the Alpha and Omega in training boys' voices, but its virtues are negative rather than positive. It is invaluable in the early stages of training rough voices, inasmuch as it compels the use of the head register. Unless great care is taken, however, *oo*

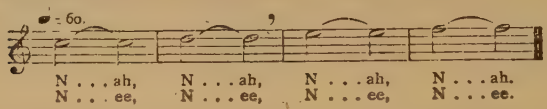
leads to a bunched-up tongue, and lips pursed as if for whistling The latter defect is of course easily cured, but the former gives great trouble, and is one of the most frequent causes of bad enunciation. Indeed, the exclusive practice of *oo* may be said to be specially successful in the production of songs without words. We have all heard of the choir at whose hands a well-known chorus was identifiable only by its familiar strains and by frequent shouts of "Hoo-loo-loo-you!" Again, *oo* does little or nothing in the actual building up of tone. Its too frequent use results in a colourless voice often developing in the later stages into a hollow hoot. The choirmaster with rough voices to deal with, however, must use this vowel sound liberally for a time. Very soon it may with advantage have other vowels tacked on to it—thus *oo-ah*; *oo-ee*, etc. The boys should change the vowel but not the tone quality. Other combinations of vowels may be used later as need arises. Perhaps the most useful is *ah-ee*. Asked to sing *ee*, the boys, like too many adults, will almost close the lips and teeth. This fault may be cured by the use of *ah-ee*, the boys being told that the position of the lips, teeth, and tip of the tongue for *ah* must be retained for *ee*, the change of vowel being got by arching the middle of the tongue. Explain that they have to aim at an apparent contradiction—a thin vowel and a round tone. As soon as he can do so with safety, the teacher should give the boys ascending scales to *ah*, watching carefully the production of the notes from



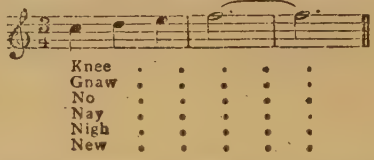
One sometimes hears of choirmasters recommending the elimination of the chest register. This is a mere shirking of a difficulty. There are hundreds of notes in a full Sunday's work which, under these conditions, are toneless and all but inaudible. No one ever suggests the non-use of a register in the case of any other voice. The lower notes of a boy's voice can be made quite pleasant and of fair power by careful practice of single notes from middle C to the A above, and by the use of soft downward scales from B on the 3rd line, rising by semitones to E. The vowels *ah* and *aw* should be used, and the boys should be told to get the feeling of a yawn. The result will be an open throat, and an increase of resonance. This care over low and medium notes is of special importance in cases where a good deal of plain-song is used, as this type of music, at all events in regard to psalm tunes and hymns, is invariably pitched rather low—a fact which prejudices many choirmasters against it. We are sometimes even told that "plain-song ruins boys' voices." If the voices are trained for the work they have to do, plain-song is no more ruinous than any other kind of music. It must be admitted, however, that this old music gives boys little opportunity for brilliance—a drawback in the case of voices which are normally soprano. On the credit side, however, may be set the fact that the singing of plain-song by well-trained boys, especially unaccompanied, is one of the loveliest things in Church music.

For brightening the tone and imparting ring to the medium and high notes, the upper half of the scale of F will be found useful, sung to the vowels

ah and *e*. Nasal resonance may be added by preceding the vowel by the sound *N*. The boys should softly sustain this nasal sound for a couple of beats, and should be told to aim at setting up a slight vibration at the back of the nose—a kind of tickling. The *N* should then lead into the vowel thus :

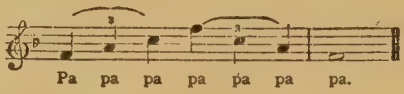


giving way later to the practice of such words as :

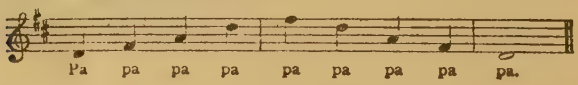


This part of the training needs great watchfulness. Nasal resonance is an excellent thing in a voice, so long as it is not heard—a Hibernian way of putting it, that may be explained by the childish definition of salt as " a kind of stuff that makes potatoes taste bad when you don't put any."

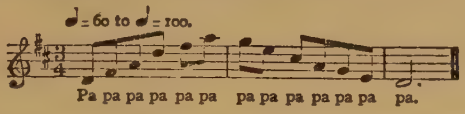
In all these exercises, the boys must aim at getting the tone as forward as possible. Teach them to think of the lips rather than of the throat. They will be helped by simple exercises, with the vowel sound preceded by *p*, thus :



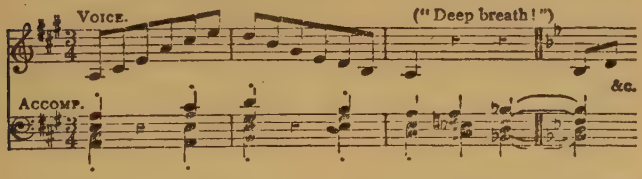
which may be extended into :



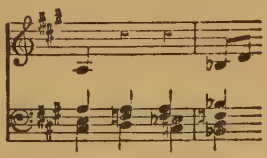
Care should be taken to make as little as possible of the consonant. The boys will at first tightly press their lips together, and produce nothing much more than a series of explosions. They can easily be taught to let the lower jaw move freely on its hinge, and to make the contact of the lips light and of the shortest possible duration. As an extended exercise in this way, and one giving valuable practice in interval singing, take the following:



It may be started at A below the treble stave, and carried up by semitones to the D or E flat lightly accompanied thus:



It may be useful to change the connecting chords occasionally to:



All these exercises practised to *ha*, *mezzo-staccato*, give good results. They may be developed almost indefinitely, and to them should be added difficult phrases from the music in rehearsal at the time.

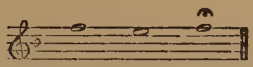
An instructive ten or fifteen minutes may be spent in dealing with a few of these passages, letting them take the place of the ordinary scales, etc. The boys will be interested in exercises based on passages of this kind, and much time will be saved later on. As a general rule, exercises should be practised softly.

It is important that nothing be allowed to distract the attention of the boys during this part of the work. The recommendation seems too obvious to be set down, but as a matter of fact, it is a not uncommon custom to allow books to be distributed while exercises are being sung. Time may thus be saved, but labour is certainly lost. The habit of filling up an odd couple of minutes during the practice by the singing of exercises is also of doubtful value. A brief rest will do the boys good, while perfunctory singing to fill in a gap does more harm than good.

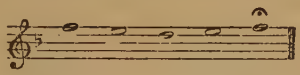
The choirmaster should resist the frequent temptation to shirk the voice-training part of the practice. Apart from its intrinsic value, it is important in another way. It impresses upon a boy as nothing else can, the fact that the voice he uses at his games, in the street, or in the careless performance of school songs, is not good enough for Church use.

There is sometimes a tendency to flatten in passages based on a descending scale. The trouble is usually with the leading-note and the mediant, both being a trifle flat. The use of the sol-fa names will help in curing this. Boys realising the character of the *te*, and singing the *Doh*, *te*, *la*, slowly and thoughtfully, will rarely be other than in tune.

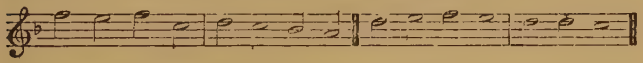
Another plan is to spend a few minutes over this exercise:



sung softly, first to sol-fa names, then to various vowel sounds, in order to make it something more than a mere cure for flattening. It may then be extended to:



Finally, take the third and fourth lines of Webbe's tune, "St Thomas," as a vocalise, directing the boys' special attention to the *te*, *doh*, and *fah*, *me*:



The exercises should of course be used in various keys. The one given will generally be found most useful. Sharpening is usually more difficult to cure than flattening. If the whole choir sharpens, the cause is generally over-excitement, though it is frequently the result of forcing up the end of a phrase by "overblowing." Soft singing, and especially the use of > at cadences, will usually put things right. In the case of an individual being addicted to sharp singing, the trouble will often be due to a defective sense of pitch—"a bad ear," as we say. Such a boy must be taught to listen rather than sing, and to aim at tuning himself, as a violinist tunes his instrument, from time to time. A really bad case of this kind is almost hopeless, however. Liberal use should be made of extracts from hymn tunes and chants for the purpose of exercises. There is hardly

any fault or difficulty that cannot be met by a careful use of passages that the boys have at their finger-ends.

There are many other time-saving devices that the busy choirmaster may well adopt. For example, consider the labour that may be saved by means of a psalter for the choirmaster's own use, with all the difficult verses, or those containing some trap, marked. Although the whole of the psalms should of course be practised, there must be many occasions when through pressure of work this cannot be done. A few minutes spent over the specially difficult verses will meet the situation. But there will be no saving of time if such verses have to be hunted out: hence the need for the marked copy.

Similarly, in practising anthems and services, let the singing through of a familiar work be a comparatively rare event. Concentrate on the difficult passages. This is, of course, an obvious piece of counsel, but it is given without apology, because the "now-go-through-it-again-from-the-beginning" plan —if plan it can be called—has still an astonishingly large number of practitioners. The choirmaster should also arrange for the systematic collection and distribution of copies. He will not be long in discovering that a good book-boy is a treasure.

Every boy should be accustomed from his first practice to sing alone, even if it be but a faltering scale, or the piping of a simple hymn. Individually and collectively they should be able to sing unaccompanied. Here a word of warning is necessary. Unaccompanied singing is invaluable for the detection of faults and for the cultivation of independ-

ence apart from its inherent beauty. But unless careful watch be kept on the pitch, it may easily lead to habitual singing out of tune. A choir has only to be allowed to sharpen or flatten a few times for the fault to become a habit. The choirmaster, therefore, should from time to time sound a chord to serve as a check. But if he is not accompanying he will find it a good plan to walk about among the boys listening to individual voices, quietly correcting faults of pose, and so on. He should do this tuning-fork in hand, testing the pitch occasionally, and checking false intonation at once.

Of all time-saving devices perhaps nothing equals the use of tonic sol-fa in the overcoming of special difficulties. In the course of a year's work the boys will be called upon to learn dozens of passages that in the staff notation bristle with accidentals. There are very few of these forbidding-looking progressions that do not become quite simple when translated into tonic sol-fa.

The boys learn enough of the system in school to serve for the purpose. The choirmaster should tell them what note they are to consider as *Doh*, and should then sol-fa the phrase to them. Not only will the difficulty be quickly overcome; the passage will be sung with more certainty and will be easily remembered, because the boys will have grasped the notes in their relation to one another. The tonic sol-fa system, in spite of the amazing choral results constantly brought before us, is still looked coldly upon by many choirmasters. Conservatism is an excellent thing, and the staff, with a wealth of historical associations in every sign, is a thing we shall not

easily part with. But when teachers have a new method which in the matter of choral music enables them to obtain better results with half the time and labour than is possible with the old, the conservatism that affects scorn of it seems to call for a less complimentary name.

As a rule, the music-reading of choir boys is a matter of ear, sharpness, luck, and imitative faculty. The choirmaster with poorish material and few practices almost invariably leaves it to these agencies, and on the whole boys have a surprising knack of learning new music by these haphazard methods. There is not much inducement for the busy organist systematically to teach his boys to read. He might cheerfully undertake it for a few months if the results were likely to be more than fleeting. But he knows too well that the following year will see him with a large proportion of new boys, and so the regular reading-lesson goes to the wall. Where the time can be spared, it will, however, be well spent. The teaching of the staff *ab initio* depends so much upon the careful grading of the lessons that it is quite impossible to deal with it in a single chapter. Those who wish to set about it will find the subject exhaustively treated in Dr McNaught's *The School Sight-Singing Reader*, published by Novello. Armed with this, a blackboard, and due pains, one may safely embark on a project that will certainly repay the trouble in cases where a great deal of difficult music has to be got through.

The teacher with very little time to spare will find that he can make quite useful readers of his boys by accustoming them to sol-fa from the staff, using very

simple chants and hymn tunes, and, of course, the movable *Doh* system. This plan, with the occasional dropping of crumbs of information on sharps and flats, time, etc., and with advantage taken of the boys' natural imitative powers, will enable them to learn new music with fair facility.

The choirmaster should ever be ready to back up his teaching by the use of homely illustrations on the spur of the moment. These are invaluable, not only for the saving of time, but because they help to avoid a cut-and-dried air in the practices. If they provoke a laugh, so much the better: they will be the more easily remembered. These and many other details in choir work are not so much matters of music as of gumption. Indeed, we may safely say that while a successful choir-trainer *may* have musicianship, he *must* have common-sense.

Allusion was made above to the imitative faculties of the boy. Full advantage should be taken of this monkey-like attribute. There is no royal road in any branch of art, but there are many short cuts. Thus, while you may teach a boy to sing a passage as you want it sung, by telling him what to do and how to do it—using few words, for the young eye, both physical and mental, is ever a roving one—the choirmaster who "patterns" instead will get the desired result far more quickly. To "pattern" well, a teacher must know how to use his voice, especially in the mixed-voice and falsetto registers. It is well worth a choirmaster's while to study singing for this one purpose alone. Apart from the increased certainty with which he will go to work, the saving of wear and tear to voice and nerves will be enormous.

CHAPTER V

CHOIR BOYS—*continued*

THE utmost skill and enthusiasm on the part of the choirmaster, however, will go for little or nothing unless accompanied by the knack of managing boys. This brings us to such matters as organisation and discipline, and to consideration of the chorister, not merely as an unusually troublesome kind of wind instrument, but as a "soaring human boy."

Here, to begin with, are a few "don'ts": Don't make a fetish of mere attendance. There may be domestic reasons for the occasional absence—a sickness, the baby to mind, or "the erran's to fetch" (a mysterious excuse that at first hearing suggests the purchase of the most popular of fish, but is merely Cockney for "shopping"). Better a sharp boy with 75 per cent. of attendances than a dullard with 100 per cent. Don't calculate a boy's pay so much on attendance as on progress. The choirmaster should be able, at the end of the term, to conjure up a mental picture of each boy's work during that term. From the maximum amount due, deduct a sum in accordance with this picture. Payment on the basis of so much per practice and service will frequently result in a useless boy getting more than a useful one.

Don't keep old boys too long. The characteristic

charm of a boy's voice is its youthfulness and freshness. A few adolescent hooters will spoil the effect of the whole choir. It is hard to part with boys who know the whole repertory, but in the long run it pays to give their places to promising juniors. Don't expect old heads on young shoulders, and don't forget what a terror you were in your own choir-boy days.

Don't bear grudges. A practice should be started with a clean slate all round. Don't allow sulking; it is the unforgivable sin in a choir boy. A hopeless sulker should be got rid of, even if he have the voice of a nightingale. He is likely to infect others with his sulkiness, and the odds are that when you want his voice it will not be forthcoming. Besides, sulkiness leaves the choirmaster helpless, and it is not good that his choir should see him nonplussed.

It may well happen that, given the conditions under which so many organists have to work—handicapped by indifferent material and poor financial support—the part of his task requiring most thought and care will be less on the musical than on the social side. We say commonly that "money talks." In choir matters we might almost say that "money sings." At all events, by means of it one may gather round one the people most likely to sing. Whether they will do so, or whether they will proceed to yell, howl, scream, or relapse into a state of devout torpor, must in the long run depend upon the teacher. Although the power of money is therefore less actual than potential, there can be no question about the increased arduousness of choir-training when the

teacher is able to offer only the slenderest inducements in the matter of pay. With the increase of cheap amusements, the growing dislike of restraint, and the many ways in which a sharp boy can earn money, choir work has to be made attractive if a steady supply of boys is to be forthcoming. For this reason, the discipline of such a choir as we are considering is a thing by itself. Indeed, perhaps discipline is hardly the word; it suggests too drastic methods. A boy is bound to go to school, to be well-behaved in class, and to do his lessons, and his parents have to answer for his failure, especially in the matter of attendance. But he is not bound to join a choir, and in many cases his parents are not anxious that he should. The choirmaster has no cane in the background, no impositions wherewith to punish defaulters, no attendance officer behind him with the powers of the law to invoke in extreme cases. Even in the rare event of parents compelling a boy to join a choir, he cannot be made to sing against his will, any more than a horse can be made to drink, though he may easily be led to the water. There remains for punishment nothing but the fine. But if fines are frequent and the pay small, pay-day may easily find the boy owing the choirmaster a small sum instead of receiving one, which is absurd. Moreover, a fine threatened early in the quarter is the merest shadow of a penalty. Even adults are not greatly impressed by the prospect of a calamity in the remote future. The boy is father to the man, and next pay-day a long way off; so that, on the whole, fining is a poor aid to discipline. In excess, too, it is a confession of weakness on the

choirmaster's part, just as a too liberal use of corporal punishment in a school points to deficiencies elsewhere than among the taught. Thus, more perhaps than any other member of the teaching profession, the choirmaster is thrown back on himself. His tact, good humour, common-sense, power of interesting—in a word, his personality—must serve as attendance officer, impositions, and cane. And after all, for this particular kind of work, there can be no better monitors. You may compel a boy at the point of the birch to do a sum correctly, even while in his heart are black mutiny and loathing for his task. You cannot make him sing well unless he is enjoying himself in the process. Good choir-training, therefore, is "all done by kindness"—which by no means implies weakness.

There are many people who regard the choir boy either as an angel or a young fiend. The more impressionable among the female part of the congregation of course imagine him as the former. In the eyes of most laymen (especially churchwardens, vergers, and sextons) he is regarded as the latter; whereas he is an ordinary boy, with perhaps a dash of the angel showing itself at times and certainly a fair supply of the other extreme. Probably most choirmasters will subscribe to the opinion that the *very* good boy is of little use for any but spectacular purposes. Nothing shows our altered attitude towards him more than the vogue and decline of Sullivan's song, *The Chorister*. A copy lies before me now, the cover with the picture of a youth (apparently of somewhat ripe age for a treble) with long black hair, taper fingers

clasping a book to his abdomen, and clad in a surplice of a cut happily unique. The effect is heightened by a background of pale blue fading into rose pink.

Is this song ever sung now? Corney Grain's skit, *The Polka and the Choirboy*, had much to do with its decline in favour. Just as *The Chorister* asserted himself (we are told that when the anthem was "upward pealing"

> One sweet voice above the rest
> I heard so sweetly singing)

even so did his brother of the parody:

> And when he sang in choruses
> His voice o'ertopped the rest,
> Which was very inartistic,
> But the public like that best.

Both boys met with the same premature fate. Of the first, we learn (with the aid of triplet chords and harmonium) in verse three, that

> He sings among the angels now
> Beside the crystal river—

while as for Corney Grain's hero

> Of course he soon grew pale and thin,
> And faded day by day
> Until—about the third verse—
> He faded quite away.

(Is there, by the by, a "semi-sacred" song in which the doomed child ever survives that fatal third verse?

This dreadful crisis tided over—the child snatched indoors from the blinding snowstorm, removed from its slumber in the abbey porch, or the mysterious ailment treated in time, and the Rubicon safely crossed to a fourth verse—he or she might grow to a green old age.)

The choir boy, then, is best treated when it is borne in mind that he is just a normal boy. The choirmaster who, whatever his age, is still at heart near his own youth, will best distinguish in matters of conduct between what is bad and what is merely boyish. Pet a chorister, and be becomes an insufferable little prig. Bully or nag at him, and his place knows him no more. Treat him with the fairness that you would ask for yourself, plus a slight bias towards leniency, and a knowledge of the right time to turn the blind eye and the deaf ear, and you will find him the jolliest and most willing of colleagues.

The importance of the choirmaster as a factor in the musical future of our country is very far from being fully recognised. It is no small matter for a man, in the course of a professional life of normal length, to be practically the sole musical influence over hundreds of boys during the most impressionable time of their lives. It is not easy to keep undimmed the ideals with which he began his work in the glamour of a first appointment. He will be helped if he remembers that, week in, week out, his boys are unconsciously learning from him as to whether the best or the worst is good enough. He will have discouragements in plenty, and not too much appreciation. Sometimes he will see the result in

the person of one of his old boys, now a choirmaster himself, filled with the enthusiasm and ambition of his early teacher, and his disappointments will be forgotten in the realisation that here, and perhaps in other cases lost to sight, he had builded better than he knew.

CHAPTER VI

CHOIR MEN

There are two good reasons why choirmasters give little or no attention to the purely vocal training of their choir men. First, one practice a week is barely sufficient for the proper rehearsal of the music for the following Sunday, and for the study of whatever new work may be in hand. Second, men generally join the choir with their vocal habits formed for better or worse, and in bad cases of the latter individual tuition is the only cure. The choirmaster has to be content with giving general good advice as opportunity serves.

A great deal of useful work in voice training, however, may be done indirectly. The roughest voice cannot but shed some of its excrescences if the choirmaster asks for, and see that he gets, plenty of soft and moderately loud unaccompanied singing at the weekly practice. New hymn tunes and chants provide excellent material for something more than mere sight-singing. Too often they are sung through to any kind of vowel sound that happens to turn up. A hymn tune causes so little trouble in the matter of reading that the singers can easily give a good part of their attention to other points. Men who are viale sol-faists should be encouraged to develop their ability to sol-fa from the staff. The enunciation of the choir may be improved

by reading new tunes to all the vowel sounds in turn, sometimes with the addition of a consonant. A pleasant quality of tone will be induced, and the voices rested, by humming new or unfamiliar tunes. This last device is so valuable that when only familiar hymns are on the list the choir might well give the words a rest and hum the music a few times. Well-known tunes may also be made into excellent breathing exercises, on the plan of one line to a breath, at such a pace as will call for careful management. In fact, the common-sense choirmaster will find plenty of scope for helpful short cuts and dodges in training his men—almost as many as in training his boys.

In the case of a newly formed choir, or one in which the adult voices are poor, it will be advisable to give the men some practice alone. If only one evening a week is available, the boys should be dismissed early, and the remaining time devoted to the men. There is no more hopeless method than keeping the boys waiting while the men struggle with their parts separately. The boys get restless and, boylike, begin to see the funny side of mistakes, and the men feel they are making an exhibition of themselves—as they are. In cases of this kind the choirmaster should aim at keeping his men one week ahead of the service list. The first half of the practice should consist of a rehearsal of the music for the following Sunday (with which the men will be fairly familiar), the second being devoted to a preliminary wrestle, by the men alone, with the music for Sunday week.

Where shall we hold the full practice? Too often

we have no choice in the matter, but, given a choice, we shall be wise if we choose the school or parish room, provided the building adjoins the church and so gives little trouble in the transport of books. We shall be likely to find a piano there, and plenty of elbow-room, whereas in the vestry we shall probably have to put up with a harmonium and close quarters. Moreover, many funny things happen at a choir practice. In the school we can have our laugh, and, provided it be kept within bounds, the practice will gain rather than lose by an occasional unbending of the kind.

At least once a month, however, the full practice should take place in the choir-stalls, the singers being helped to maintain a proper demeanour by wearing their cassocks, and by the presence of one of the clergy, who should open and close the proceedings with a collect. It should be made clear, however, that the discipline and entire conduct of the practice is in the hands of the choirmaster. If the cleric can sing and throw himself into the evening's work, so much the better. If, the opening collect over, he relapses into an obviously bored state, so much the worse. There are practical advantages in his presence when such details as responses have to be overhauled, as he is then able to supply the versicles and so improve his own part of the service. The practice over, he has an opportunity for a few minutes' chat with the choir men—an opportunity which rarely occurs on Sunday or at any other time. I believe there are few choirmasters who will not value the presence of the clergy at the weekly practice, always provided (1) that he shows keen interest in

the music and singers, and (2) that he does not show it by interfering.

This practice should, of course, be as far as possible unaccompanied, as indeed should all practices be. It may be well to repeat the warning given elsewhere as to the importance of checking at once any tendency to sing out of tune. An unaccompanied choir sometimes flattens so gradually and so unanimously that only a keen ear can detect the fault. The occasional fault, however, may easily become a habit.

A few years ago a representative Committee in the diocese of Wakefield made an exhaustive inquiry on the subject of Church music in the locality. The published report contained a good deal of matter on choir men, and as human nature is pretty much the same the country over, we may profitably consider some of the Committee's findings.

Thus, for a start:

"In some choirs there appears to be a difficulty in getting the adults to practise the psalms and hymns on the ground that they know them quite well already. . . . Certain lukewarmness seems to prevail as regards the rehearsal of the responses, Litany, etc., which, according to the replies sent in, appear to be practised only 'when necessary,' or 'occasionally,' or 'never.'"

What choirmaster does not know that "certain lukewarmness"? It is one of the prices we have to pay for using anthems and other delights as a bait wherewith to draw the coy choir man to practice. An excellent plan if, having got him there, we can teach him to acquire a taste for

such plain, wholesome fare as routine work done well, details looked after, and so on. Not quite so excellent, however, if it ends in his developing an unhealthy appetite for bait only, with no stomach for anything else. This policy, carried to extremes, ends in the choir man not only choosing the music but also deciding what shall be practised. In such cases he is not only choir man but choirmaster as well, and the organist is his very humble and obedient servant. This will be so until organist and vicar put their foot down in the choir stalls (regardless of corns) and intimate that they are prepared to adopt a simpler kind of service rather than submit to the tyranny of the man with (or without) a good voice who condescends to attend practices and services only when there is music in hand that meets with his approval.

On the important question of behaviour in choir the Committee notes with regret that "there are many choirs where the adult members make no attempt to kneel, either sitting bolt upright or merely bending forward." One can only wonder how the incumbent at such a church can dare to exhort the people to reverence when he knows, as he must or should know, that his choir men merely *pretend* to be reverent. On this point the report says: "It is sometimes urged as an excuse for not dealing with choir men who do not kneel when they can, and with other acts of irreverence, that a voluntary choir has to be handled very gently. But although there is no compulsion to volunteer, a voluntary singer, once a member, must be just as amenable to rules and discipline as a paid member." This latter sentence

should be printed in bold type and hung up in every vestry, that he who runs may read. It is not unlikely that in some cases he who reads would run. If so, he would be no real loss to the choir, had he the voice of a Caruso.

The report contained also a long list of suggested choir rules. Perhaps there were too many of them, for it is a common experience that in a voluntary choir, especially as regards the adults, very few rules can be enforced. A rule that speedily becomes a dead letter is not only a standing evidence of want of judgment and discipline; it tends also to weaken the few vital rules that should rarely or never be relaxed. Thus, it is easy to enact that a man who is absent from the weekly rehearsal shall not sit in the choir on the following Sunday, and in the case of a choir abundantly supplied with good voices the law may be kept with wholesome results. But if your only soloist is the delinquent, and you have to choose at the last moment between altering your service list and breaking the rule, it is not the service list that suffers. The rule goes overboard and stays there. For, as was said elsewhere, you cannot have one rule for the soloist and another for the duffer, unless the latter knows he is a duffer. He never does, of course; in his heart of hearts he looks on himself as a neglected soloist.

Even more than choir boys, then, choir men need tactful handling. They have to be kept keen and interested, and the difficulty in most cases will be to rouse and maintain this keenness and interest without pandering to the tastes of the less musical members—usually the ones most ready to express

their opinion as to what type of work should or should not be sung.

The smaller the number of available men, the greater the difficulty of good discipline. So much is this so that Mr Sydney Nicholson, in his excellent little book on Church Music, suggests that in villages and small town parishes or in places where only a very simple type of service is desired, the choir should consist of boys only. "Choir men should be introduced only after very mature reflection. . . . The number of men available will necessarily be few: if they are lost they cannot be replaced, therefore their wishes will of necessity exercise an undue influence on those in authority. Choir men do not as a rule like singing in unison, nor do they desire to confine their efforts to the simplest things; their natural enthusiasm and ambition often lead them to wish to attempt music which is beyond the powers, if not of themselves, at any rate of the choir as a whole. . . . Without in any way wishing to disparage the work of choir men as a class, it may safely be said that nine-tenths of the difficulties connected with small choirs are due to the senior members."

Most of the difficulties in choirs of all sizes will disappear when the authorities realise more fully than at present the importance of limiting membership to keen churchmen. The communicant test ought to be sufficient, but we know it is not. It is, however, the only one that can be applied, and this being so we ought to admit no one to membership without first making it clear that the work entails not only considerable sacrifice of time and pains but very probably of personal predilections as well.

If the aspirant is not prepared to make such sacrifices he should be gently warned off—a Spartan course if he happens to be the very kind of singer we happen to need badly! But after all the nearly ideal choir man is not such a rare bird that we need be afraid to wait for him, instead of filling our stalls with anything that happens to come along with a useful voice.

What is the ideal choir man?

We shall get at a picture of him by noting a few things he does not do. He does not absent himself from practice or service when the music is less attractive than usual. He does not say: "Merbecke next Sunday? Again? Can't stand that kind of thing. Shall take a day off." When called on to sing an occasional verse of a hymn in unison, he does not retire into his shell, or show his disgust by a performance consisting of little more than a slight movement of the lips. When another man is given a solo that the ideal choir man thinks should have come to him, he does not sit in the congregation on the occasion of his rival's performance, or give himself a holiday. If he arrives at the church too late to take his place in the choir, he does not go for a walk instead, but remembering that he is primarily a member of the congregation, he sits in the nave. He is to be seen there, too, when some slight vocal ailment prevents him from singing. (It would be *so* easy—and so British—to lounge at home, minus collar and coat, reading the Sunday papers.)

As was said above, this type of choir man is not nearly so rare as pessimists would have us believe. Most readers who have had a fairly long experience

as choirmasters will, I think, agree that our voluntary choir men have yielded us a surprisingly large number of loyal assistants and good friends.

Of the less satisfactory remainder few will fail to respond to a judicious appeal by the organist or vicar on the first sign of slackness. By screwing up and weeding out we must aim at a choir in which the members are churchmen first and singers a long way after. The process may involve some simplification of the music, and will almost certainly cost us a trifle in the matter of popularity. But in the long run we shall build up a choir well worth a far greater price.

CHAPTER VII

ACCOMPANIMENT

UNTIL very recently a candidate for an organist's post was tested severely on the solo-playing side, with a hasty glance at his abilities as a choir trainer and accompanist. It is now generally recognised that this method of selection laid stress on the least essential of an organist's qualifications. The congregation may easily escape his voluntaries and recitals, but only deafness can save them from his choir and accompaniments. Unfortunately the solo is even now bound to play an over-prominent part in the testing of a candidate because it is the only branch of technique that can be judged at a sitting. His methods of training and accompaniment require a fairly long period before they can be appraised. His theories in the matter of accompaniment must remain theories until the condition of the choir allows of their being put into practice. Thus, he may rightly hold that accompaniment should not be a mere bolstering up of the choir and congregation. But if his predecessor has encouraged the singers to lean on a fat organ part (even for such minutiæ as amens and responses), the new-comer must be very gradual in his withdrawal of such support.

Moreover, given good teaching and hard work, a player of very limited natural gifts may become a highly efficient soloist, whereas no amount of in-

struction can make him a resourceful and sympathetic accompanist. The soloist who sticks faithfully to his copy can never go far wrong. He will not increase the appeal of the music—he may frequently reduce it—but he will rarely destroy it, because most good organ music is intellectual rather than emotional, and therefore comparatively independent of the temperament of the performer. A good deal of organ music of the classical and architectonic type even gains from an aloof and coldly correct performance.

But the highly efficient mechanical player makes a poor show when faced with the numerous problems that arise in accompanying an elaborate service, or even a simple one. And the problems have an awkward habit of arising without warning and of varying from time to time. If they are solved at once, nobody—least of all the congregation—is aware of them, and the organist gets no credit. If they are not solved there is a more or less apparent disaster, and the organist's ears will tingle.

A fundamental difference between solo-playing and accompanying, then, lies in the fact that whereas in the former safety lies in sticking to the text, in the latter the reverse is often the case. The accompanist of a Church service must have the good taste and discretion of his brother at the piano in the concert-room, *plus* a very liberal supply of resource and initiative. One piano is pretty much like another, whereas it would be difficult to find two organs in the world exactly alike. As if the wide variation in size were not enough, we have a further complication in the absence of a standard on both

the mechanical and tonal sides. Stops called by the same name vary not only in power but even in quality. The final touch is added by the local peculiarities brought about by the disposition of the various parts of the organ—here the swell stowed away to the detriment of its brilliance; here a choir weak on paper, so placed that it is unexpectedly telling; elsewhere a pedal open diapason in such a position that it is deafening to the player and quite tame to the listener in the nave. Add three further points, (1) the acoustical peculiarities of many churches (especially large ones); (2) the fact that the organist is alone among accompanists in having to conduct by his playing; and (3) that the singers are usually a considerable distance away, and frequently more or less out of sight, and we see why this branch of music more than most must depend upon the alertness and "gumption" of the player rather than upon textbooks or teachers.

Certain general principles, however, seem to be clear:

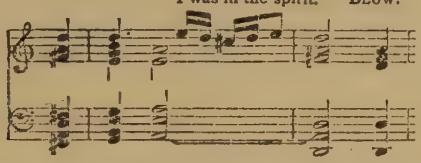
1. The player must not hesitate to disregard the registration indicated by the composer if it does not suit his organ. For example, the call may be for a clarinet solo with flute accompaniment. But if the player's clarinet is too delicate or too coarse, or if he has no flute of the right power for the type of accompaniment indicated, he should alter the whole scheme. He may find it better to give the solo to a flute, with gamba or oboe background.

Again, such indications as "Full Swell" and "Great to Principal" often call for modification. On some modern organs the swell is the most powerful

department except the solo tubas. Only a powerful choir using the most telling part of their voices can hold their own for long against a big swell, with the box open. These indications are frequently met with in old service music and anthems. Often the texture of the accompaniment will remind us that the composers had in view organs much more lightly voiced than those of to-day.

Such writing as the following

"I was in the spirit." BLOW.



often appears in old anthems, and in organ accompaniments of Handel's oratorios. The result might have been tolerable on the organs of a century ago; on a big modern instrument it would be a hideous row.

This passage serves to remind us that it will often be advisable to rearrange an accompaniment. Here we should do away with the thick low chords, replacing them by well-laid-out four-part harmony. Apart from their position on the keyboard, the handfuls of notes in the quotation represent a method of writing for the organ that is usually out of place to-day, when the great number and variety of 16 ft., 4 ft., and 2 ft. stops provide so many duplications of the notes played that successions of big chords are unnecessary,—a fact too often overlooked by composers. Even in an organ solo a long series is apt to become noisy and wearisome.

Sometimes a decorative passage or accompanimental figure will need toning down, especially if it lies rather high, or is intended to be played on a 4 ft. flute or some other prominent solo stop. Occasionally we shall find a composer making a miscalculation in the opposite direction by writing a solo passage for the left hand in such a way that it is killed by the pedal part, or by the right hand, or by the suggested registration. In these and other cases too numerous to discuss we must be guided solely by the effect on the organ at our disposal.

2. If our choir is efficient and well-balanced we may dispense with an organ part that is merely a duplication of the voice parts. A good example is Lloyd's Communion Service in E flat, which gains in effect if the organ is used only for the symphonies and interludes and during the passages in which the voices sing in unison, and at an occasional climax. If we dare not leave our choir in this way, we should make the organ part more of an entity by judicious inversion of the parts, and by occasional soloing. (The suggestion is made with some trepidation. We know too well what can be done in this way by showy or inexperienced players, and by those with a very limited knowledge of harmony.)

3. Although it goes without saying that the accompaniment should not drown the voices, there are occasions when the centre of interest shifts from the vocal to the instrumental side. At such moments —they are always brief—we must not be afraid of piling on tone.

4. When accompanying a solo, or a passage sung by a number of voices of the same type, we should as

a rule use stops that will be in contrast with the vocal colour. Thus, a melody sung by a chorus of boys—one of the most beautiful of choral effects—is best accompanied by a stop of the gamba type (perhaps filled out by a very quiet stopped diapason) or by a gamba and soft double, played an octave higher, thus giving a soft 4 ft. string colour. This combines delicacy with good supporting quality, and has the further merit of standing well away from the voices. Too frequently we hear the effect of such passages ruined by chords played with a flute tone which, though perhaps not loud, has what we may call a pervasive property and effectually mops up refined treble voices. But of course much depends on the kind of flute chosen—a lieblich is usually excellent, whereas a hohl-flute is often either too big or muddy. Flute tone may generally be used low on the keyboard with good effect if the boys are singing high.

Though we are not often able to obtain such excellent contrast as good soprano boy tone and a gamba or oboe, we may apply this principle to other solos. We may be lucky enough to have a couple of tenor soloists, both equally good but with a widely different vocal timbre. Is it meticulous to suggest that this difference should influence our choice of stops?

And in accompanying a bass solo we should note whether the voice part is the bass of the harmony. If it is, we must be discreet in our use of 16 ft. tone for the organ bass. In accompanying choruses we should lighten our pedal tone when the basses are singing in their lower register. Ask your basses

what they feel like after a long, low-pitched hymn in which they have had to fight throughout against your pedal open diapason.

5. The registration of an accompaniment needs at least as much care and forethought as that of an elaborate recital piece. Often it will call for more, because, as we have seen, the combination of organ and vocal tone involves questions of balance and contrast that do not arise in solo playing. It is not so much a matter of frequent stop-changing as of a nice calculation of the means best suited to the composition, the voices, and the building. A few stops will give us all we want, if we choose the right ones and ring the changes on them skilfully.

6. Much of the drab effect of organ-playing is due to the fact that characteristic stops are too rarely heard alone. We frequently take the brilliance from a reed by drawing a flue which adds nothing appreciable in the way of power. How often do we give the diapasons a chance of displaying their nobility? There is no finer accompaniment for a broad and dignified *forte* passage than a single great open diapason. Some of us will never know how fine it is until our swell to great coupler gets happily put out of action. We shall then find out a few other things as well—*e.g.* the excellence of the contrast between the fixed great and the variable swell; the expressiveness of the swell after a long passage on the uncoupled great; the impressiveness of the great diapasons used alone; and, when the coupler is again in working order, the splendid effect to be got by occasionally holding our full swell in reserve and coupling it to the full great at a climax or cadence.

This particular coupler, however, rarely gets out of order, so we shall do well to acquire the above valuable knowledge by putting it in at least once during every service and leaving it in for not less than five minutes. We may eventually become so austere that we shall be able to take our seat at the console without mechanically reaching out a hand to the swell to great coupler—perhaps the final and crowning stage in an organist's development.

CHAPTER VIII

ACCOMPANIMENT—*continued*

So far we have been considering the accompaniment of anthems and settings of the service. There remain the simpler but not less important items in which the congregation generally join—the responses, psalms, and hymns. There is little scope here for subtlety or delicacy. If these parts of the service are to be congregational, the organist has to take charge, and play in such a way that people are encouraged to sing. This is not so much a matter of playing loudly as many people seem to imagine. Nor is it a matter of skill, though of course it goes without saying that one must be at least a fair player to be successful. One thing is clear—some organists have a knack of getting a crowd to sing and some have not. This knack occasionally puzzles people because they see that it depends very little on technical skill. Yet they see the same gift used almost every week of their lives. They are not surprised when a crowd is roused and held by a speaker who sheds his aitches and shows a limited knowledge of grammar. They take it as a matter of course that a comedian with a song and patter that on paper is the merest drivel is able to make a couple of thousand people of all kinds ache with laughter. If you ask them for a solution of a fact so common that we have long since forgotten its

strangeness, they will tell you that it is almost entirely a matter of personality and conviction. In a lesser degree these two qualities are at the back of all successful accompanying of a crowd. With them must go a social sense so well developed that the player is willing to allow some purely musical considerations to be in abeyance for the time being. Only in recent years have many of us come to see that community singing is a social rather than a musical activity. Attempts to make such singing resemble that of a choral society end in a result that has the faults of both and the virtues of neither. The half-hearted effect of so many of our Church services is one of the prices we have to pay for aiming at refinement in the wrong place. The fashion was set, or at least confirmed, by *Hymns A. & M.*, with its lavish use of expression-marks. Nobody who has sat among the congregation at a church where these marks are faithfully followed (as they still are in an astonishingly large number of places) can have failed to note that each sudden drop in power by the choir practically silenced the people.

This gives us our first general principle in the accompanying of the congregation. The expression must be general rather than particular, and gradations of power should not be violent save in the direction of increase. Even this should be reserved for special use—for example, a hymn with a refrain of a jubilant character. Here we may well play the verse *mf* and the refrain *ff*. Milton's paraphrase of Psalm 136 ("Let us with a gladsome mind," *E. H.* 532, and, in another version, *A. & M.* 381) is an excellent

example of a hymn calling for such treatment. The first and last verses should be played full organ, and the remainder accompanied so as to bring out the verse and chorus construction, the first two lines *mf* without pedal (or unaccompanied in some cases), the two last *ff*.

This scheme serves to remind us of another good working principle—viz. many hymns should be uniformly quiet or moderately loud, but none should be very loud throughout. Even in the rare event of there being no portion of the text calling for a reduction of power, we shall make such reduction in order to avoid monotony and fatigue to the ear.

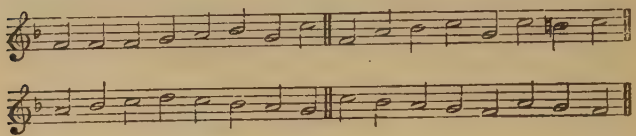
A congregation needs far less organ support than is generally supposed. At any church where a congregational type of service is the rule we may hear the whole body of people singing with very little organ and choir background, especially in hymns of a quiet character. There is nothing more impressive in Church music than this kind of subdued heartiness, especially in certain ancient hymns sung to their proper melodies—*e.g. Pange lingua, Adoro Te, Verbum supernum, Jesu dulcis memoria*, etc.

It is now being proved in an increasing number of churches that an average congregation can be brought to a point at which they may be trusted to sing a hymn softly and in good time and with little or no help from choir and organ. This being so, it is high time the old bogey of "congregational dragging" were laid. What we have been so ready to call "dragging" was often no more than the little natural easing of the time at the end of a phrase,

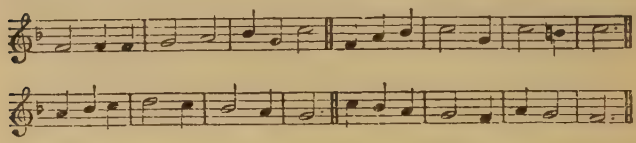
partly for breathing purposes, and partly from an instinctive feeling that a point of repose had been reached. We hear a good solo-singer do the same thing constantly, and praise him for it. We should have no words hard enough for the accompanist who tried to hustle him over these passages, yet too many of us try to take our congregations by the scruff of the neck, so to speak, and haul them from line to line of a hymn tune as if the most vital thing in music were its division into measures of exactly equal length.

When Debussy gives us such a rhythmical scheme as a bar of four beats followed by one of five we say: "How delightfully elastic!" When our congregation gives us pretty much the same thing we shoot out our reeds and say: "No, you don't!" But strict square rhythm in hymn tunes is very largely a mere *A.&M.* tradition. A glance at the original edition of such collections as Ravenscroft will show that our old English psalm tunes were anything but square. They contained not only snatches of syncopation but occasional mixtures of duple and triple time. On paper these appear to be difficult, but in practice they give little trouble. Our surprise at the ease with which an average congregation learns such tunes is a poor compliment to their intelligence. Before we hastily assume that such little complications are beyond them we shall do well to remind ourselves of the ease with which a music-hall audience picks up a much more difficult rag-time chorus. A practical illustration is worth any amount of theory, so I venture to draw on my own experi-

ence. First, here is Gibbons' well-known "Angels" as given in *A.&M.* :—



Here is the melody as Gibbons wrote it:



At four hymn-tune lecture-practices I have found the audiences able to learn the original form of the tune in about five minutes. (Only a very small proportion had copies of the music.) I have then asked them to sing the *A.&M.* form, and to give me their choice by show of hands. The verdict has been overwhelmingly in favour of the old version—so much so that in only one case were there any votes the other way, and then a mere half-dozen. These audiences were not composed of musicians or of the class that is generally alleged to be highly educated. One of the lectures took place in an East End church, with a gathering of about six hundred people drawn from the neighbourhood; another was held in a manufacturing town, and two were given to typical village audiences. No doubt others who have taken part in the recent revival of hymn singing have had similar experiences.

I have gone rather fully into this question of

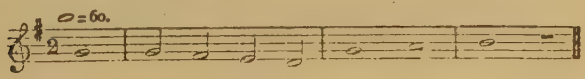
rhythm because it has considerable bearing on accompaniment. For too long we have been making a fetish of strict time in hymn singing, basing our practice on the *A.&M.* tradition in this as in the matter of detailed expression. We forget that the book was compiled at a period when the chief requirement in music, as in other arts, was that it should be free from irregularity and ruggedness. We know what was done to folk-song by editors of the day; not only were rhythms simplified, but modal characteristics were in some cases completely destroyed. Much the same ill treatment was given to hymn tunes of all kinds—plain-song, German chorales, Bourgeoise, and old English psalm tunes. The call was for tidy, well-behaved music, both in and out of church.

Unfortunately, while we have scrapped Bowdlerised folk-song, we still perpetuate such dull parodies as the *A.&M.* version of "Angels" given above. When we realise that our congregations possess a good level of musical intelligence in the rough, waiting to be taken in hand and developed, we shall find that the accompaniment of a crowd is not, after all, a matter of dragooning. A most convincing example of the futility of the unbending beat was furnished at Queen's Hall one Sunday during the war, when the audience tried to sing a hymn to Dykes' "Melita," accompanied by a full orchestra and led by one of our foremost conductors. The hymn was taken at a brisk pace, without a hint of pause or *rallentando*, and with emphatic insistence on the fact that the final note of each line was worth one beat only. We did our best to sing with heart and voice, but

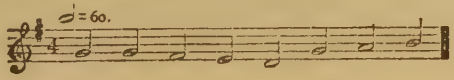
the latter organ made a poor show. We kept abreast of that iron baton, but only by ending each line with a semiquaver and a hiccup.

With the revival of interest in congregational singing comes naturally the adoption of a lower pitch for a good many tunes, and an increased use of unison singing on the part of the choir. At first sight the *raison d'être* of the latter may not be apparent. It comes about chiefly because experience proves that interest in hymn singing is stimulated by varied treatment of the verses of a long hymn—the alternation of boys and men's voices, unaccompanied harmony and unison with free organ part, melody sung by the men against a discant by the boys, etc. More and more organists will be called on to provide free accompaniments to unison hymn singing. A good deal of skill and experience are required for the improvisation of such accompaniments, and it is obviously impossible to treat the subject with proper fulness in the course of a chapter. The point that more than any other seems to call for consideration is the connection between the pace of the singing and the style of accompaniment. At present too many organists seem to be obsessed with the contrapuntal methods of Bach, forgetting that congregational singing in Germany was (and still is) so slow that the tune is able to carry an elaborate series of passing-notes. All the signs point to the adoption of a fairly quick pace in English hymn singing, and the accompaniment should therefore be of a type in which a proportion of the notes of the melody are treated as passing-notes. If this is done hymns may be

sung at a good pace with no effect of hurry or loss of dignity. The florid method demands a very slow pace if it is not to sound fussy. The accompanist who wishes to provide good harmonisations of hymn tunes has only to apply a rule he was taught when harmonising melodies as a student. He then learned that it is not good to provide every note of a melody with a chord, and he soon realised that as a rule the notes best treated as passing-notes were those falling on the weak part of a measure. Another question bearing on harmonisation is that of the unit. The notation of hymn tunes has so far been largely an affair of minims and semibreves, and we have come to regard the former as being worth never less than one decidedly steady beat. This was no doubt one of the reasons why a generation ago the long notes at the beginning and end of lines in old tunes were dropped. With a minim as unit, they made undue demands on both patience and breath-control. But the reduction of the tunes to a long series of equal notes gave us a decidedly dull result. Those of us who have restored the use of the semibreves at the beginning and end of lines, and have at the same time regarded that note as the unit, have been surprised at the vigour and rhythmical interest of old tunes so treated. We ought not to have been surprised, of course, for it is obvious that



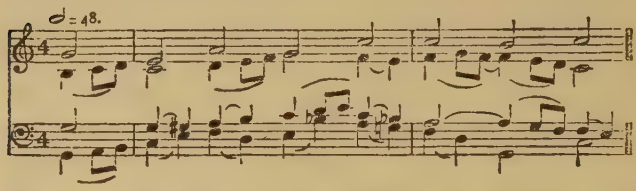
is in every way superior to



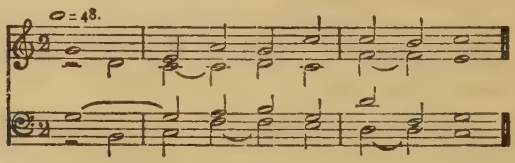
The purist who objects on the ground that sixty semibreves a minute is more than double the pace at which the tune was originally sung will have many supporters until he is consistent, and adopts an approximation to the original speed (if speed it may be called)—a rate so leisurely that only the shorter metrical psalms could be sung at a sitting. Twelve or sixteen lines sufficed, as we may imagine when we read that until 1848 the usual pace for syllabic psalm tunes was M 30, or two seconds to a note! [1]

Now, getting back to our accompaniment of hymns, we see that the Bachian method, so suitable in its place, is likely to be a hindrance rather than a help in our congregational singing.

Instead of this style—



we shall, I venture to prophesy, make increasing use of this—



Indeed, it seems not unlikely that our national genius for absorbing alien art forms and recasting

[1] *Studies in Worship Music.* John S. Curwen. First Series, p. 168.

them in comfortable shapes will eventually lead us to scrap the Bach harmonies of chorales save in performances of the *Passion* and other works in which they appear. When the tunes are used as congregational hymn melodies we shall probably adopt a quicker pace and (as a result) a simpler harmonisation with far fewer chords.

Much of what has been said of the accompaniment of hymns applies to that of the psalms when sung to Anglican chants. As congregations are usually unable to join heartily in this part of the service, however, we have to compromise between playing for a choir and backing up a crowd. There is no need to point out the more obvious methods of obtaining variety—inversion of parts, soloing, etc. Textbooks on the subject furnish plenty of examples, many of which, however, are wasted if even a small proportion of the congregation are singing. A method too little practised is the antiphony of men's and boys' voices in unison—one of the simplest and most telling of all, as it enables us to vary the harmony and so get rid of the monotony that is bound to result from a long series of verses being sung to one brief harmonic formula. A large portion of this phrase is made up of a full close, which may occasionally be dodged by a free accompanist, to great advantage on the score of continuity. Another point in favour of frequent unison verses in Anglican chanting is the opportunity it affords of varying the harmony during the recitation. If the changes of chord are made to coincide with the verbal accent they not only add variety but keep the singers together. The importance of unaccompanied singing

for a few verses from time to time is now being more generally recognised, but so far we are too apt to think that unaccompanied singing should always be in harmony. Given the right kind of melody, the unaccompanied unison of a big chorus has a thrill of its own.

Responses and Amens should be unaccompanied whenever the officiant and choir are to be depended upon. This applies to unison responses no less than to those sung in harmony. The effect is somewhat austere, and therefore appropriate. We shall eventually live down our dislike of unaccompanied unison, with decided gain so far as variety in our services is concerned. Readers who doubt this may be reminded that only a few years ago it was the custom to accompany the Comfortable Words and the Proper Prefaces. Very few organists do so to-day, and of those the majority probably keep up the practice as a concession to local taste. The growing demand for an increased clerical use of the natural voice in our services is significant of a desire for simpler methods. Excessive use of monotoning and superfluous accompaniment of simple details of the service have landed us into a mass of conventions the ridiculousness of which we shall not see until we have given them up and can look back at them.

The accompaniment of plain-song is a branch of work that calls for special preparation. The reader who wishes to follow up this fascinating study is advised to consult the authorities mentioned in the bibliography given at the end of this volume. When he has done so he will find that a good many of the

above principles may be applied—*e.g.* economy in the number of chords, sparing use of 16 ft. pedal stops, frequent unaccompanied passages, and (in chanting) change of chord during the recitation. If he follows the strict school he will be modal in his harmonies. Disposed to relax, he will be in very good company if he uses diatonic harmony with a sparing use of accidentals corresponding to the *musica ficta* of a few centuries ago. In either case he should usually confine himself to common chords and their inversions, with a few passing notes. Such discords as the diminished seventh should be taboo, and the dominant seventh admitted only occasionally, and even then as a passing-note.

By way of appendix, a few words on the playing over of hymn tunes. The point seems a small one, but it is really important, because bad attack and unsteady singing often result from a casual method of giving out. Too few organists realise that the principal object of the playing over is to show the pace at which the hymn is to be sung. Generally one line is enough, though if the tune is one that has been recently introduced, and is therefore only fairly well known, we shall be wise to play the whole. It is not good to play two lines of a four-lined tune: having gone so far, we have given an impression that we are going to play it all, and should do so. If we lead into the tune by means of an improvised interlude, as is sometimes necessary, we should make it clear when we leave off rambling and begin announcing, so to speak. I have heard this kind of thing done so vaguely that the actual commencement of the hymn took choir and people by surprise. If we

are systematic in the length of the break between playing over and starting we shall be the likelier to get a good attack from the singers. Let it be understood that the break will always be just sufficient for the taking of a deep breath; rehearse this until the choir as a matter of course inhales the moment the sound of the playing over ceases. This sounds mechanical, but it is no more so than the method adopted by a conductor. If we wait to draw some stops after giving out the tune, we introduce an element of suspense, and our belated start takes people unawares. What kind of attack would a choral conductor obtain if, having got his singers to attention, he proceeded to arrange his score or adjust his pince-nez, and then suddenly gave the first beat? The little break after the playing over is like the warning "take breath" move of the conductor's baton before his first beat. If it is prolonged it hinders rather than helps.

It remains only to be added that playing over should be free from such emotional adjuncts as *tremolo* or *vox humana* or solo stops of the "fancy" type. We are not dealing with the text, but merely announcing the tune and the pace at which it is to be sung. The farthest we should go in the matter of expression is to use a degree of power in keeping with the character of the hymn—*f* or *mf* great diapasons or swell reeds for a jubilant hymn, soft swell or choir stops for the meditative and penitential.

CHAPTER IX

CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

CONGREGATIONAL singing calls for a chapter, not only for its own sake but because it is becoming more and more a concern of the organist. A generation ago he too often frankly discouraged it or took up an attitude of amused tolerance. He is now beginning to realise that congregational singing may go hand in hand with the efforts of the most skilled choir. Much of the old opposition on the part of organists and choirs was based on the idea that the development of congregational singing implied the gradual suppression of the choir, or the reduction of their music to the simplest of standards. They had lost sight of the fact that in early times the Church had distinguished between the music for the skilled singers and that for the people. The indiscriminate setting up of a "fully choral" service removed the last vestiges of such a distinction. Tallis' festal responses, monotoning on a note uncomfortably high for the unpractised singer, elaborate settings of the canticles, hymn tunes pitched high and sung with violent dynamic contrasts that lured the man in the pew to raise his voice with a *fortissimo* in one line only to leave him high and dry and self-conscious with a *pianissimo* in the next—these things made the musical part of the service into an affair of the choir, with apologetic essays from such of the people as

were sufficiently capable or daring. As a result of this putting of the simpler parts of the service beyond the comfortable reach of the average member of the congregation, the distinction between the choir and people's music was obliterated, with the natural consequence that in most churches there were generally a few people who did not scruple to join in a familiar anthem or service setting. We need not be surprised that intrusions of this kind caused organist and choirs to look on congregational singing with disfavour.

Even to-day this attitude is sufficiently common to show that the pros and cons are in need of discussion. Let us try to look at the subject all round, for convenience putting the matter in the form of a debate between a vicar, an organist, and a musical layman.

Clericus. Laicus

L. Well, reverend sir, how go things at St Praxed's?

C. I'm afraid we're a little unsettled. You remember our homely musical ways and our hearty congregational singing? It had become quite a tradition, but I fear it will soon be a thing of the past, thanks to our new organist, against whom I have nothing to say except that he is far too good a musician for us simple folk.

L. How so? Surely you can't have too good a musician as your organist.

C. I'm not so sure of that. Our people have been accustomed to making a joyful noise. We had a choir, but it was hardly necessary. It looked nice—

some of it, at least—and the smoothing over of jealousies among the men, and the occasional handing over of a refractory boy to the secular arm, provided me with some sporting interest in the music. On the whole, we were uncultivated, but happy. Unfortunately, a few months ago our organist, who was a local wheelwright, and therefore able to approach his task with a fine blend of the detachment of the amateur and the vigour of the mechanic, left the neighbourhood. We filled his place—and I fear more than filled it —with young Organicus, and our homely traditions are no more.

L. But what does he do?

C. Well, to begin with, he holds the view that the one thing necessary to choral and all other musical salvation is Refinement, with the largest of R's. On no account must the full organ be heard in accompanying, and if it is used in a voluntary, it must be only in the last few chords. The choir mainly sing *sotto voce.* Our leading tenor, who was formerly a host in himself, is now reduced to a mere draught. Gone are the rich chest notes of the boys. Organicus was shocked on hearing that I had occasionally on high days bestowed a sixpence on the boy who sang loudest. The whole thing is now so delicate and refined that the congregation are afraid to sing lest they should spoil it. Where formerly choir and congregation formed one large chorus, we have now a small choral society and a rather bored audience.

L. But Organicus is at St Praxed's to train the choir. If he is doing that well, you cannot

complain. It seems to me to be one of those cases where both sides are wrong in not arranging matters so that they may have the good choir *and* the congregational singing. If Organicus——

C. Speak of him, and you hear the beating of his wings! Here he is, in good time to answer for himself. . . . We are just discussing congregational singing.

Organicus. A contradiction in terms! The word singing is just as much a technical expression as playing, composing, or conducting, and implies a management and use of the various vocal organs that can be acquired only by proper instruction. Concerted singing implies rehearsal. Seventy-five per cent. at least of an average congregation have untrained voices, and neither they nor the remaining twenty-five per cent. rehearse. Congregational noise there may be (and generally is), but congregational singing——!

L. Piano! Piano! You'll tell me next that I can't ask my wife to pass the salt unless I first receive instruction in elocution, or that it is presumption on my part to attempt to write an ordinary business letter without first attending classes on literary style or the English language. You overlook the well-known fact that a crowd of voices, of no merit individually, may in the mass produce a fine effect. On this and certain kindred questions you musicians are apt to look at things from a purely artistic standpoint. No man can successfully take the lead where a community is concerned without first making himself at home with their point of view. How many of you organists try to get at

the mind of your congregation in this and similar matters?

O. So you would have me listen respectfully while Major Peppercorn gives me hints on the proper conduct of the service, and welcome Miss Acidula Tombs when she brings me a new kyrie or vesper hymn she has composed—"a little thing of my own"—with a request that I shall have it sung at St Praxed's forthwith?

L. I said, "the mind of your congregation." You are speaking of the mind—or mindlessness—of Major Peppercorn and Miss Tombs. Both these varieties, which flourish in every parish, you will be justified in dealing with as you think fit, so long as you manage to suppress them. I mean, rather, that corporate sense of your congregation which very rarely reaches you because more often than not it never gets expressed. You can get at it only by imagining yourself to be one of the crowd, with limited musical knowledge, unformed taste, very decided views as to what is right, and strong likes and dislikes. There is our friend Major Peppercorn, for instance: an excellent old fellow, except at such times as he is giving you musical instruction. Say to yourself: "I am no longer Organicus, but the gallant Major, retired. Such voice as the parade-ground has left me I enjoy raising in the hymns of my boyhood. I go to St Praxed's, and when 'Hanover,' or 'St Anne,' or some other old favourite comes along, I find that confounded Organicus pitching the tunes so high, in order to show off the beautiful voices of the boys, that I am reduced to the necessity of singing the melody for the most part an octave lower than

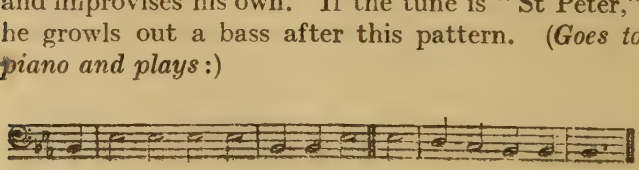
I should, dodging up to the correct pitch when convenient. I generally give it up after a couple of verses. Even when the pitch is right, the pace is too quick, and there is no breathing space at the end of the lines, so I am put out of action on both sides. The accompaniment is like a finicking piece of chamber music, and the choir lick their way through the old tune like the highly trained and skilful little concert party they are. I suppose its all very high class, but I only know that whereas formerly the hymns lifted me up, they now cast me down."

O. Do you seriously expect me to pitch tunes so low that my boys will be using almost entirely the lower and middle parts of their voices? A boy is a soprano, and should not be expected to sing music in contralto compass.

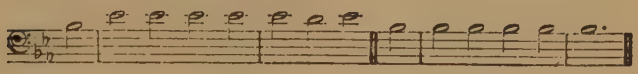
L. And the average man in the congregation is a baritone, and untrained at that. Is he to be called on for top E, F, and even F♯ in hymns, and to recite on E or E♭ in the psalms, so that your young imps may distinguish themselves?

C. Why should he not get over the difficulty by singing in harmony?

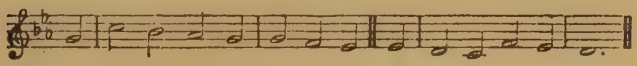
O. If he is content to sing the same harmony as the choir, why not? But he generally isn't. He soars above such base mechanical aids as the book, and improvises his own. If the tune is "St Peter," he growls out a bass after this pattern. (*Goes to piano and plays*:)



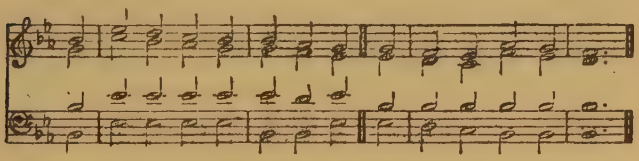
His son rather fancies himself as a tenor, and, like his father, having a good ear, is able without instruction to bleat out:



His daughter, who also possesses the family ability to clothe a melody with appropriate harmony on the spur of the moment, takes a hand as well. Her contribution to the common stock is more melodious, being an exact reproduction of the tune a third below. This method is generally known in the humbler musical circles as "singing seconds," and is so called, I suppose, because the interval of a third is used exclusively. I give it a more imposing title, and call it a canon in the third below, both parts being used simultaneously. So she sings:

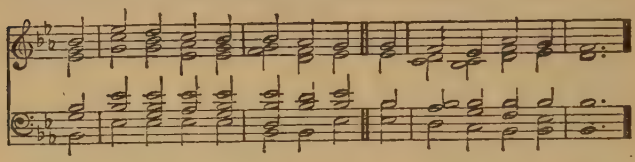


The combined efforts of the family—mamma singing the melody—result in:



—harmony, by the way, which is as good as that of some popular mission hymns by which not a few of the clergy set great store. I do not object to it so much in itself. Sung by its composers, after Sunday evening supper, at "The Lindens," Acacia Road, it

may have an appeal all its own. I protest only when it is used at St Praxed's side by side with the harmony sung by the choir, resulting, for the ears of those so placed as to be able to hear the *tout ensemble*, in this:



If these good people want to sing in harmony, they should practise, and learn to read, or else for ever hold their peace.

L. Quite so! But, better still, why not encourage them to sing in unison, and leave the harmony to choir and organ? This can be done only if hymns are pitched so that the *average* voice is suited. Everybody admits the fine effect of a crowd singing in unison. Why not choose tunes of a broad type, pitch them fairly low, take them at a moderate pace, and make this imposing effect a feature at every service?

O. What a row the Major will make when "Hanover" comes along! And you can't repress him; brawling is an indictable offence, but not bawling. And how are you going to ensure that people will confine themselves to the melody? If a man feels inspired to invent a new and original tenor or bass part, nothing can stop him. And what of the man who sings his part correctly from a tune-book? Would you ask him also to sing in unison?

L. Yes. The effect of a solitary tenor or bass among a crowd of people singing the air is ludicrous. Such a one should be invited to join the choir, or else conform to the usage adopted by the bulk of his fellows. If he won't, he won't and there's an end to it. But I fancy that only a cantankerous one here and there would insist on his right to please himself. It is an odd thing that while all the clergy agree as to the importance of congregational singing, and practically all musicians are prepared to testify to its impressiveness, yet little or nothing is done to make the most of it. At present its effectiveness is a matter of chance. I admit that its spontaneity is a factor, but I feel sure that, without destroying this element, we might organise and develop the popular side of Church music with advantage. Even within the limits of hymn singing much might be done towards the attainment of something more than a steady pounding through things. Here are a few excellent musical effects to be got by simple means, practised at few churches, so far as I know. First, there is the antiphonal singing of choir and congregation. Many well-known hymns lend themselves admirably to this arrangement—*e.g.* "Onward, Christian soldiers," "Forward! be our watchword," "Brightly gleams our banner," "We plough the fields," "Praise, O praise our God and King," "To Thee, our God, we fly," "A few more years shall roll," "Jerusalem on high," and many others. All these are long hymns with a refrain. Why should not the first and last verses be sung by everybody, and the remainder, with verse and chorus, by choir and people? Or, if it is felt that this method

gives the people too little to do, choir and congregation might sing alternate verses. I suggest it only for long hymns. This would be less fatiguing to both voice and ear than the rendering of six, eight or even ten verses with exactly the same disposition of voices. "Forward! be our watchward," for example, has eight verses of twelve lines! Any chorister will bear me out when I say that the singing of processional hymns is most fatiguing work. With the choir taking the verse, and the people the chorus, all would remain fresh, and the spirit of the hymn would be unflagging. Again, with the other long hymns made up of short verses, welcome variety would be provided by giving the odd verses (after the first) to the people, the choir singing the even, with the first and last full.

Another effect not sufficiently used is the alternation of light and heavy voices. Hymns that are sung in unison, such as plain-song, or those stirring French ecclesiastical melodies that are becoming popular here, give us an opportunity for this. Again, let the first and last verses be sung full, with even verses by boys of the choir and women of the congregation, and the odd ones by all the men. This not only gives us vocal contrast, but enables the organist to use his instrument in the least monotonous way. The boy's and women's voices can be accompanied with various light combinations, the men's with heavy, and the harmonies of course should be varied throughout. Here you have the maximum of effect and variety produced by the simplest of means. Compare any of these methods of treating long hymns with the usual performance of every verse

alike, and see which will best keep up the interest of all concerned. I have no fear as to your verdict.

C. It sounds very nice, but who is to tell the people what and when to sing?

L. You have your monthly music list in the parish magazine; why not give the arrangements there? When the hymn is announced at the service, it ought to be easy to add the half-dozen necessary words as to the method of singing it. I don't expect the first few performances will pass off without a hitch, but things will soon settle down, and after a few months a tradition will be established.

Another way of adding to the interest of hymn singing is the revival of some of the old settings of psalm tunes with the melody in the tenor. The *English Hymnal* contains a few specimens. I have heard these sung without the people being in the least confused by the counter theme of the boys. The arrangement should be used for only a few verses, and it is well to strengthen the tenor part by the addition of the first basses, if they can be spared. Of course the verses so treated should be sung unaccompanied. The effect is very fresh and at the same time ecclesiastical.[1]

O. All this is very fine, but do you think that the average choir, which finds its time well filled in preparing services and anthems, is likely to have any to spare over such small fry as hymn tunes?

L. I fear they must be prepared to sacrifice themselves a little for the common good.

O. I can see them at it! No, sir, the increase

[1] See also *The Tenor Tune Book* (The Faith Press), a collection of well-known tunes with faux-bourdons by modern composers.

of unison singing, and the general simplification of the music will lead to trouble. Resignations will fall like leaves in autumn.

L. Arising out of that remark, as they say in the House, may I ask who selects the music for the average parish church?

C. Usually the organist, while the vicar retains a right of veto.

L. A good arrangement, if it could be carried out. As a matter of fact, however, the choice is ultimately that of the choir. Many a vicar and organist is restrained from doing what he feels best for the music of his particular church by the fear of his choir men. Their interest must be maintained; they must have opportunities of showing what they can do; too much unison-singing will damage their precious voices, and so on. The result is a type of chorister who comes to church when there is interesting music to sing—or at least music interesting to him—and stays away at other times.

O. You can hardly expect a man with a good voice to take much interest in music where his voice, training, and musical skill have no scope.

L. Not if he is a choir man first and a churchman a long—a very long—way after. I should like some such test as the following to be applied:—the music for three months to be simple, though of course good of its kind, with proper pains spent on its preparation. At the end of the term you would have lost some of your choir and some of your congregation. But you would have lost not one keen churchman. We shall never get the right kind of material in our choir until every member of it, asked

whether if he were not in the choir stalls he would be in the body of the church, can honestly answer: "Yes." They need to be taught that they are merely members of the congregation, sitting in a special place for convenience' sake, and doing a bit of church work. I wonder what Clericus would say if Miss Acidula Tombs, who is a district visitor, should decide that she could no longer act as such because the particular street allotted to her was not sufficiently interesting -"The people are not of the type I like. The architecture of Tippins's Mews also offends me. I must therefore in future be allowed to transfer my activities to the more congenial Acacia Road, or I must cease to be a district visitor." Would Clericus weakly give way?

C. Hardly!

L. Just so. And if Acidula is of the right sort, I can see Tippins's Mews still brightened by her weekly visits. If she is of the kind to resign, you and Tippins are well rid of her. Now when you and your clerical brethren are prepared to deal just as firmly (though tactfully, of course) with Acidula's brother, who is pardonably proud of a light tenor voice, but who has been known to absent himself when a solo that he had hitherto regarded as his own special tit-bit was given to another, or when music that he considered dull was to be sung, you may really claim to be governing your church workers and choosing the music. At present your choir men choose it.

C. But what of the congregation? Don't you think that they will also resent the simplifying of the service music?

L. Here and there you will meet a member of

the flock who wants a sacred concert without paying more than a penny or a button for it, but I am sure that the majority will not complain—always provided (1st) that the simple music is as well done as was the elaborate, and (2nd) that they are encouraged to take a bigger part in the singing themselves. Simple music has not been fairly tested till it has had pains spent on it. We want in our services more simple things done well, and fewer ambitious things maltreated. As to the effect of the type of music on attendance, I fancy there is little in it. I could take you to several London churches where there is a good choir, elaborate music, and a sparse attendance, and to just as many where the music is simple and the congregation large. Similarly, it would be easy to find dozens of cases where the reverse holds good. But it will not be so easy to find a church where there is good preaching and a poor attendance, so that it looks very much as if the pulpit is a bigger factor than the organ loft.

I am quite in sympathy with the natural desire of an organist to give a fine choir a chance of edifying the congregation. It is good for everybody concerned that they should develop their powers and use them in the church. But I submit that the time has come when they might reduce their elaborate and too often somewhat secular service music in favour of something simpler, and devote their skill to giving us extra-liturgical performances of some of the great store of beautiful sacred music that is so far unknown to the average layman. These performances, in the case of shorter works, might form part of an organ creital, or (that the tail may, for a change, wag the

dog) they might be given as choir recitals, with a couple of organ solos by way of relief. What an improvement in the musical taste of both choir and congregation would result from the performance in this manner of such works as Gibbons's *Hosanna to the Son of David*, Wesley's noble *Let us now lift up our hands*, or a Bach cantata! Our choirs would be just as busily employed as they are now—even more so—and they would be spending their energies on fine music instead of, as is too often the case now, complacent platitudes strung together for purely commercial reasons.

O. I hope you have not overlooked the fact that the complete congregational songster cannot expect to come into being without some little effort on his part.

L. On the contrary, I have based my arguments on the supposition that the songster will rise to the occasion. The very successful congregational practices that are now being held in many parishes prove that he (and even more, she) is willing enough to make the effort. How long the effort will be sustained depends chiefly on whether the organist is a live coal or a wet blanket.

CHAPTER X

CONGREGATIONAL PRACTICES

During the war a few of our poorer parish churches solved the problems brought about by half-empty choir stalls and insolvent choir funds by the adoption of an entirely congregational service. It is probable that the present need of rigid economy will lead others to follow the example. After all there is little to be said in favour of spending a considerable sum annually on maintaining a surpliced choir in a small centre of population where the musical result is likely to be negligible.

Three questions will at once arise: Can a congregation "carry on" entirely without practice? If practices are necessary, when and where should they be held? How should they be conducted?

Let us try to find practical answers.

Where the music consists of well-known hymns, with chants for the canticles and with the psalms read, practices would appear to be unnecessary. They will, however, be desirable. The more obvious faults that are inevitable in the singing of an untrained mass may be corrected at such meetings, instead of being modified or smothered by aggressive use of the organ. Moreover, it is sometimes difficult to find familiar and suitable tunes for special and occasional hymns. Periodical practices will therefore be necessary. Even in churches where there

is a strong choir the people should have an opportunity of learning new tunes, instead of being left to pick them up in a casual way during the service—a slovenly method that too often arouses prejudice against a fine tune that properly taught would have been appreciated. Moreover, people who insist on their right to sing (as most church folk do) should be prepared to take a little trouble in the matter. "No trouble = no rights" should be the formula in this as in other things.

The question of place will usually be so connected with that of time that when we have settled the latter we have settled both. I have often heard this discussed by clergy and organists, and the average experiences of the speakers may be summed up thus: "We have tried to hold congregational practices after the Sunday evening services, but the attempt was short-lived because the people wanted to hurry home as soon as the service was over. We tried to fix up a week-night, but soon found that the more energetic folk could not spare the time. The few really good singers of the flock were in request for other musical work, so that the two classes that counted most could not be depended upon. Moreover, our choirmaster could come only at the cost of at least a part of an evening's teaching. Finally, the use of the schoolroom, parish hall, or church on a week-night involved preparation and expense —lighting, heating, attendance of caretaker, etc."

The one time that seems to have occurred to few is the half-hour *before* the Sunday evening service. It is a loose end of time that simply cries out to be used, and of course involves no extra work or expense.

A good proportion of the congregation are in their seats with at least twenty minutes to spare, and will gladly come even sooner if they realise that there is a useful object in view.

Such use of this spare half-hour effectively destroys the coldness and reserve which spoil so many Church services. The time is convenient for the choir-master, since it calls him to work only a very little earlier than usual. It may be objected that he is already usually underpaid and overworked, and therefore should not be asked to undertake this new task. But the rank and file of the profession will hardly grudge an occasional half-hour spent on teaching the people, especially when they see how greatly the slight sacrifice is appreciated and how much the services are improved. Moreover, the bringing of organist, choir, and people into closer touch can hardly fail to put their relationship on a more cordial footing than usually obtains.

The frequency of the practices may vary, but it will be found well to hold them monthly (except, perhaps, during the summer), and to fix on a given Sunday in each month.

As to the conducting of such practices, the following methods have had the test of some years' regular use.

It will be advisable to arrange for at least a portion of the choir to be present. This will generally be easy, since three or four men will be sufficient, and the boys can be persuaded by the promise of a special mark (value 1d. or 2d.) if they attend, and a bad mark (of the same price) if they don't. The choir may be stationed at some point in the nave, but the best results will usually be got by putting them in

their usual seats. The choirmaster may stand on the chancel steps, but will probably do better by exercising a roving commission up and down the nave. He will thus be among his pupils, and will also have an opportunity of hearing what his choir sounds like from the body of the church. He should be able to sing—this goes without saying, though there are still too many organists who fail to realise the fact—and he must not be afraid of addressing a crowd. The less stiff and formal he is, the better will be the practice. In a word, the qualities required are just those needed in keeping an ordinary singing class interested and busy. The music to be practised will usually be hymn tunes. In any case, it is well to start with such popular fare. The practice of chanting and other music had better be left until there is a good nucleus of people interested in the subject.

In teaching a new tune, the choir should first sing a verse or two alone (without organ, if possible). They should then sing the first two lines in unison, with organ, the people repeating it, first with the choir, and then without. The verse having been thus dealt with in sections, let choir and people sing it through together in unison with organ, followed by a verse with people singing the melody, accompanied by the choir in harmony. By this time, the people will be able (even eager) to do a verse unaided. If the teacher can give any historical or other interesting comments on the words or the music, so much the better. It is a good plan to include the hymn just learned in the service following—indeed, the practice will "go" better if the first few minutes are devoted

to a hymn that is on the service list, and is only fairly well known. This will ensure its success later, and will give the people something they can make a good show with early, when the numbers are likely to be comparatively small.

The teacher will be agreeably surprised at the readiness with which an intelligent congregation will correct such faults as dragging, mistakes in rhythm, breath-taking at the wrong place, feeble attack, and so on.

Here is another use for the practice. A reviewer of the new *A.&M. Supplement* objected to the inclusion of psalm tunes with the melody in the tenor, on the ground that the congregation will do as they have done in the case of Tallis's five-part responses, and sing the treble discant instead of the tune. *If* there be any danger of such a fiasco, it may be avoided by three minutes' work at the congregational practice. The mention of faux-bourdon settings brings us to a development of Church music that may without much difficulty be brought about by means of these practices. Not only may choir and people unite in the Ravenscroft and other old tenor versions of psalm tunes, but such beautiful settings of the evening canticles as those by Tallis, Byrd, Gibbons, etc., with alternations of plain-song and polyphony may be used with fine effect. The unison verses may easily be sung by the people (with or without a few men's voices to lead them) accompanied, while the harmonised verses, simple as they appear to be, will give the finest of choirs work worthy of their best care. What a good day it will be for English Church music

when we find choir and congregation with a definite part in the service, and each taking pride in performing it! We shall hear nothing then of the tyranny of the choir and organ. There are possibilities, too, in the direction of treatment of hymns with choruses, etc., which will readily suggest themselves, but which can be managed only by the occasional meeting together of organist, choir, and people in some such way as we are considering.

Although the presence of at least a section of the choir adds greatly to the interest of the practice, useful work may be done without their aid. The teacher must be prepared to do the patterning himself. As a rule, in the early stages of learning a tune, he will find the organ a hindrance rather than a help. Unless the instrument is very favourably placed, and well played, it will be difficult to obtain unanimity. The organ part may well be added for a final burst when the tune has been grasped.

If there is a spare set of hymn books with music—a practice set is sometimes available—they should be handed round so far as they will go at the beginning, with the usual reminder that they are not to be taken away. One of the choir book-boys should be made responsible for their collection at the end of the service.

In the case of a congregation below the average of brightness a good way of thoroughly learning (say) a four-lined tune will be to take it on some such plan as this:

First line of verse 1.
First line of verse 2.
First two lines of verse 3.

Third line of verse 1.
Third line of verse 2.
Third and fourth lines of verse 3.
Fourth verse all through.

When practices have become well established attention may be given to chanting. This, however, cannot be done without a pointed psalter or marked Prayer Book. The best plan is to persuade the churchwardens to purchase fifty copies of the cheapest form of the psalter in use, place the copies at the west end of the church, and invite the congregation to take one on coming in. In one church where this plan has been adopted about twenty or thirty of the people have bought their own copies, so that the better part of a hundred of the congregation are singing from pointed copies, with excellent results.

Finally, here is an example of the practical value of people's practices. The choir boys of a London church were recently away on a holiday for two Sundays. On these two occasions the Choral Celebration and Evensong were sung throughout by half-a-dozen choir men and the congregation. The singing was wholly in unison, the women singing the alternate verses in the hymns, and the portions of plain-song Communion Service usually sung by the boys. Musically, the effect of the antiphony was excellent, while the sense of independence, and of being responsible for a definite part of the service, seems to have been not the least of the pleasures experienced in the nave. With monthly practices such times as holidays, weekday services, or other occasions when the choir is scanty or absent, may easily be provided for.

There is general agreement to-day that our parochial services should be at least in a good measure congregational, and everybody admits the fine and stirring effect of such a service. Here we have a good thing to our hand, and one of the few about which most of us are agreed. Why not take the very little pains required to organise and develop it? A half-hour a month will work wonders. Think of the many half-hours spent on departments of Church music that after all matter very little, and ask if one of them cannot be dropped in favour of this monthly practice that has in it such possibilities of edification for all concerned, whether in organ-loft, chancel, or nave.

CHAPTER XI

VOLUNTARIES

THE word "voluntary" is an accommodating elastic term whose prime meaning is uncertain. Some tell us that various preludes and interludes were so called because they were improvised. Others have it that the organ pieces to which the choir entered and the congregation dispersed were called voluntaries because they formed no part of the service, being played or not at the discretion of the organist. Early in its musical career the word took on a more technical flavour by being applied to a definite musical form—if that can be called definite which was one of the most formless of creations.

The "voluntaries" of a couple of centuries ago were indeed a mixed breed. They ranged from highly decorated versions of psalm tunes, via grave diapason movements and strident "trumpet pieces" (with naïve echoes on the newly invented "swelling-organ") up to the classic dignity of preludes and fugues. The palmy period of the "voluntary" was the century from 1720 to 1830, and the best specimens were provided by Croft, Beckwith, Keeble, Boyce, Greene, Battishill, Kelway, Samuel Wesley, Russell, and Adams. Some of their worthiest efforts have been given a deserved new lease of life by their reissue in the series of "Old English Organ Music,"

edited by John E. West. A certain sturdy vigour and wholesomeness make them still well worth playing, and after a liberal dose of spicy and over-stimulating modern music, a meal of this simple fare is a sound prescription. After a century of more or less honourable life, the voluntary began to suffer from the competition of the organ transcription. It soon had the worst of the fight—a fight that has gone on ever since, and one in which organ music proper is gradually reasserting itself, though it will never oust the transcription. The voluntary of to-day may be anything or nothing—a Mendelssohn or Rheinberger sonata or a Bach work at one end of the scale, and a few meandering chords at the other. Between these two extremes of highly organised music and entirely unorganised platitudes, what infinite variety do we not meet! Here we find a choice of nothing but the best, played often enough to deaf ears; there the very worst, organist and the many-headed in perfect accord, shallow calling to shallow. Complaints in the ecclesiastical and musical Press are surprisingly rare, but it is a significant comment on the taste of organists that they are invariably directed at flippancy and vulgarity. The protest against "Merry Epilogues after Tragedies, and Jigging Voluntaries," in *The Spectator* of 28th March 1712, is too familiar to need quotation.

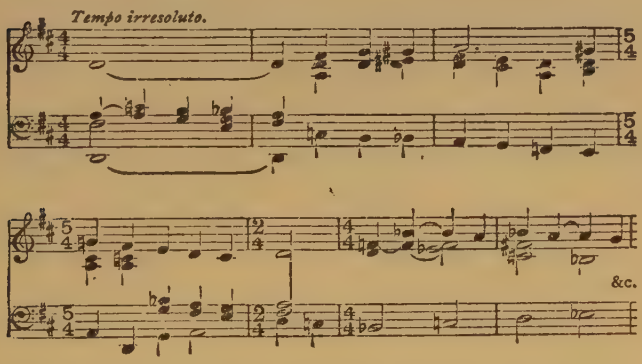
Less well known is a complaint in *The Parish Choir or Church Music Book* (1847), in the Answers to Correspondents: "We cannot agree with H. E. D.," (runs the Editorial pronouncement) "in the entire repudiation of voluntaries, and confining the use of the organ entirely to the accompaniment of the

choir. We are quite ready to agree with H. E. D. that the manner in which organ voluntaries are played and the subjects chosen for them are often excessively indecent, and that they are often intruded where they have no use but to regale idle ears with brilliant music, and to relieve the puritanical monotony of the dialogue between the reader and clerk in churches where the solemn chant of the Church is regarded as too carnal. But before the commencement of divine service we believe there is good authority for an organ symphony."

As the voluntary now belies its title, having become a regular feature in our churches, it may be useful to ask what kind of music is best for the purpose. If we may judge from the constant stream of new organ music—good, indifferent, and very bad—for which there is presumably a demand, an extraordinary variety of standard obtains. Perhaps we shall be helped if we begin by considering the object of the voluntary. Taking the in-voluntary first, if it be regarded merely as a useful noise for covering up the footsteps of choir and clergy, then the famous prelude of S. S. Wesley (was it?) who once showed his disapproval of something or somebody by putting down the lowest pedal note, and slowly building up and sustaining a chord of C, answers the purpose as well as anything else. Indeed, on musical grounds, there is much to be said for it as opposed to some organ music inflicted on us, inasmuch as it is at least without offence. If we regard the in-voluntary not merely as a covering for noise, but also as an introduction to—and therefore to some extent as a part of—the service, we shall not be over-

stating the case if we say that it ought to be as much in keeping as any of the choir music. To fulfil this demand, it should be carefully chosen and prepared.

Instead, what happens at quite fifty per cent. of our churches? The organist is in the vestry until the last minute or two before the service is due to begin, keeping—or not keeping—order. He then rushes to the console—generally in a state of irritation, adjusting his surplice or hood *en route*, throws his legs over the bench, draws out a few stops (not forgetting the swell to great coupler), starts arranging his service music with his left hand, puts his right foot on the swell pedal, while with the remaining limbs he begins in this style:

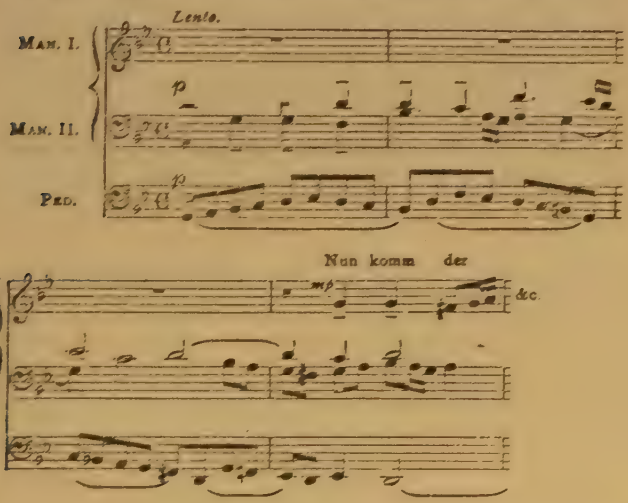


Now why should he inflict this kind of thing on his hearers twice a week? Even a clever improviser may easily abuse his gift. It may be worth while to remind him that, delightful as his unpremeditated strains may be, the considered work of the best organ composers is likely to be even better. The cleverest of organists has no more right to give us his own

organ music first, last, and all the time, than to fill the choir library with his own anthems and services.

There is much to be said for making a feature of the organ music before the service. In the first place, it has an advantage over the postlude in that the congregation is able to listen. Most of them are in their places some ten minutes before the service begins. The footfalls of later arrivals are usually quiet, even apologetic, and, as a noise, not to be compared with that of the exodus at the end. Here is the organist's opportunity of playing movements that are too quiet to be used as postludes, and too severe for recital purposes. There is perhaps a greater wealth of really good organ music of this kind than of any other. There are hundreds of beautiful pieces, besides slow movements of sonatas and choral preludes galore. Perhaps no modern organ composer has given us a greater number of short pieces of the highest class than Rheinberger. They would keep his name green even without the fine sonatas. There are Twelve Monologues, Twelve Characteristic Pieces, Twelve Meditations, Twelve Pieces (Op. 174), Six Short Pieces, and Twenty-two Trios. It is not too much to say that there is not a weak number among them, and two-thirds of them are quiet and suitable for introductory voluntaries. The time taken in performance varies from two to six minutes. One might quite well play through the whole of them at the rate of two or three a week, and at the end begin the series again, without wearying himself or his audience, so good is the music. Then there are countless choral preludes by Bach and his contemporaries (some of whom deserve a better fate

than to be completely overshadowed by him), and by modern German writers. In the works of Bach alone enough suitable music may be found to supply the greater part of a year's Sundays. The organist who draws on them in this way will be pleasantly surprised at the rapidity with which they will gain public favour. Played in these quiet moments before the service, they find the hearers in the most receptive frame of mind, and indeed, from their nature, they can make their appeal at hardly any other time. What can be better for the opening of a service than such strains as this, on *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* ?—



No music can be less of the earth, earthy, than this. Those solemn opening measures suggest the quiet, slow unfolding of great doors.

There are many such movements of Bach that are

not heard so frequently as they should be—for example, *Schmücke dich, O Mensch, bewein*, the three preludes on *Vater unser, Wachet auf, Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten, Von Gott will ich nicht lassen* (these last two with the theme in pedals with 4-foot stop), and the beautiful *Wenn wir in höchsten*, the old man's death-bed composition.

Unfortunately, although every organist, from his pupilage to his dotage, plays the so-called "Giant" Fugue threadbare, too many carry their study of the choral preludes no further. This one they know, merely because it happens to have been taken from its place in the Catechism Preludes and pitchforked into one of the earlier volumes of the Novello edition of the preludes and fugues. The choral preludes are yearly becoming better known in England, but there are still far too many congregations to whom the name of Bach suggests nothing but loud, quick fugues. Bach's worst enemy is the organist who works some half-dozen fugues to death (usually playing them without practice), just as his best friend is a conductor such as Sir Henry Wood. There are more Bach enthusiasts made at Queen's Hall than in twenty average churches.

A long list might easily be made of neglected organ music suitable for before-service voluntaries. Space does not permit, however, nor is it necessary. Every organist has only to turn over his library to find dozens of beautiful works that he has never played.

There is one small difficulty in the way of playing set pieces before the service. In churches where punctuality is not the rule the organist runs the risk of finding himself at the end before the choir

has entered. This necessitates a meandering anti-climax. If the unpunctuality is caused by the unreadiness of the choir, the remedy is in the organist's own hands. If the fault be with the clergy, he may have some difficulty, but there must be very few churches where it cannot be arranged for the choir to leave the vestry at the first stroke of the clock. This done, it remains only to time the music.

In cases where the church bells are very audible in the building, the ringing of the final bell before the service is apt to kill any quiet organ music. I have known two parishes where the organist, wishing to give a short recital before the evening service, had no difficulty in arranging that the tolling should be limited to about a couple of dozen strokes, to come between two of the items. After all, in these days of clocks and watches the clanging of a bell for five minutes before a service is merely an unnecessary noise, and cannot be defended as can campanology proper.

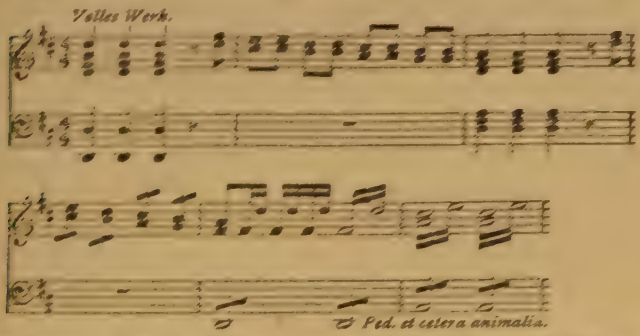
If organists will but make up their minds to be at the console ten (or at least five) minutes before the service, prepared to play some well-chosen music, they will improve their technique, enlarge their repertory, add enormously to the edification of the congregation, and soon count the time so spent as among the most enjoyable brief spells of the week. Moreover, this good music will put both player and people in tune for the service. The organ prelude is the first sound heard by the congregation, and it ought to be a worthy breaking of the silence, however simple it may be. The ten per cent. of organists who are gifted improvisers may well depend as a

rule on their delightful talent, but the remaining ninety have no right to penalise the punctual members of the congregation by grinding out "extempore playing" of the type quoted on page 133. On the principle of making the punishment fit the crime, I can imagine nothing more crushing than the recording of such efforts on the gramophone, and compelling the perpetrators to hear on the Monday morning (when their vitality is at its lowest) that which they inflicted on their hearers the day before. One dose would probably be enough. I can imagine many an organist, thus hoist with his own prelude, crying: "Heavens! did I play that?" and, a humbler and wiser man, determining to make better provision for the future.

CHAPTER XII

VOLUNTARIES—*continued*

Although comparatively few organists play set pieces for in-voluntaries, all perform the task of what is not too happily known as "playing the people out." Perhaps the phrase was originally used satirically. Those who know the delightful letters of Mendelssohn will recall his quotation from the postlude he heard in that land of song—and bad music—Italy. "This," he says, "is what the fellow was playing":



It is certainly bad, but most of us have heard things very little better in England, even of late years. We have organists who can as effectually dispel the atmosphere of devotion as did their Italian brother. Good easy man, he may have been in his very best form that day. He may even have been

congratulated afterwards by admiring friends. One can see him receiving their praises with a deprecatory air: "So glad you liked it; yes, a little thing of my own," not guessing that he was to receive a quite unexpected immortality, not as an artist, but as an awful example.

After all, he was merely subscribing to the popular idea that a postlude must needs be loud, quick, and cheerful. This, with certain other conventions of our profession, needs reconsidering. A very quiet work is not often desirable, but there is much to be said for, on occasion, a *mf* diapason movement, or a piece beginning rather loudly and ending (when most of the noise of footsteps is over) quietly. The out-voluntary is so closely joined to the service that it can hardly be considered entirely on its own merits. It is too commonly the practice to play pieces which, though excellent as music and first-rate for recital purposes, are quite out of place at the close of a service, unless something of a more restrained character be played first, to act as a kind of buffer. Pieces of very bright or dance-like rhythm (*e.g.* most marches, Guilmant's *Grand chœur alla Handel*, and all other pieces in minuet form) should not be thrown at the congregation until they have had time to forget their religious exercises and to resume some of their social duties. This is not a long or difficult business. One minute from the time the clergy have disappeared into the vestry will be sufficient.

Another convention is that Bach's fugues are, *ipso facto*, good postludes. This is true of only some of them. The giving out, with Great to Principal, of such bright, rhythmical subjects as those of the

two G minor fugues, the great A minor, the D major, or the C major (following the toccata), always seems an impertinence, and even a flippancy. The very tunefulness of the subjects is the trouble. They seem to strike a jarring note unless introduced by a prelude. Fugues that are ideal as voluntaries, from the manner of their beginning, are the two in B minor, the little E minor, A major, F minor, and two in C major, the E♭, and, most of all, the noble, melancholy work following the "Dorian" toccata. Other works good for the purpose when something austere is in keeping are both fantasias in C minor, the Canzona, the prelude in F minor, and the Alla Breve, and when something bigger is required, the E minor prelude to the "Wedge" fugue, the toccata in F, and the preludes in B minor and C minor. The organ works of Bach (apart from the choral preludes) surely divide themselves into two classes. In one the value is purely musical; in the other (usually not less valuable as art work) the composer has obviously laid himself out to give players an opportunity of showing their skill. Such works as the D major fugue, the D minor toccata, the "Wedge" fugue, the G major fantasia, and the E♭ prelude are surely recital pieces. If played in the style they seem to demand, they are out of place as voluntaries. Let us reserve them for recital purposes, and make them as brilliant and exciting as possible. On the other hand, let us see to it that we give our congregations ample opportunities of knowing the other—and deeper—side of Bach, by fitting and frequent performance of his more serious fugues and choral preludes.

Voluntaries may often be chosen with reference to the service which they precede or follow—an excellent way of popularising good organ music. For example, not many organists let the Sunday after Ascension Day go by without playing Guilmant's march on *Lift up your heads*—one of the best of voluntaries.

There are many other pieces that might easily become (if they are not already) hardy annuals. Thus, in Advent, you will find an encouraging number of people enjoying Bach's prelude on *Sleepers, wake!* For Christmas, we have Guilmant's *Offertoire sur deux noëls*, and, even better, though not nearly so well known as it deserves to be, Gigout's *Rhapsody* (published in the set of Ten Pieces), with a treatment of *Adeste Fideles*, far superior to that of Guilmant. The tune *Vom himmel hoch* (*A.&M.* 57, *E.H.* 17) is now so well known in England in connection with the season of Christmas that some of the excellent organ music written round it by various German composers might quite well be added to our list. The two short preludes by Bach on *In dulci jubilo* are useful items, the canonic one being particularly charming, and an elaborate work on this same tune by Karg-Elert is worth the attention of good players with ample organs. For Epiphanytide, there is, of course, the well-known *Marche des Rois mages*, of Dubois—the playing which is usually followed by anxious inquiries as to the cipher on the organ. In Lent and Passiontide we have a good choice of pieces—Bach, Brahms, Karg-Elert, and Reger preludes on *O Sacred Head*, Charles Wood's splendid and dramatic prelude on

St Mary, Parry's quieter work on the same tune, Bairstow's two fine pieces on *Pange Lingua* and *Vexilla Regis* and others too numerous to mention. The fantasia by C. W. Pearce on *The Royal Banners* and *All Glory, Laud and Honour* will be a good choice for Palm Sunday. Also, for this day, Bach's fantasia in B♭ on the latter tune will be a popular voluntary. Of the two works with this melody as a basis, that in B♭ is to be preferred, because the tune is easily followed by the average listener. At Easter we can play Dubois's *Alleluia*, introducing *O filii et filiæ*, or John E. West's variations on the same theme. Here again, Dr Pearce comes in with a postlude founded on *Ad cœnam agni providi*, while for dedication festivals at which the plain-song tune "Urbs Beata" has been sung, I know nothing better than the same composer's piece founded on it—scholarly, interesting to the player, and easily followed by the hearer.

For the Feast of Corpus Christi there is an excellent piece by Dubois called *La Fête Dieu* on the plain-song of *Lauda Sion* (the punning dedication is surely unique—it is inscribed to the Abbe Panis, and the opening phrase is "*Ecce panis*"). For this feast also a voluntary that will always strike a responsive chord is an arrangement of *He shall feed His flock*. The day of Handel's choruses as voluntaries is over, but there are a few airs such as this that nobody but the ultra-purist need be ashamed of playing. They are better sung, of course, but they are better played than left alone if they help out the spirit of the day.

While mention of organ music founded on hymn

tunes naturally calls to mind certain German composers, ancient and modern, it is matter for congratulation that some fine English works with a similar basis have lately seen the light, thus adding materially to our store of voluntary music suitable for use on special occasions. The sets by Sir Hubert Parry and Charles Wood stand out as being specially notable collections; worthy additions to the list have come also from Sir Charles Stanford, Charlton Palmer, John E. West, C. H. Kitson, Harold E. Darke, and others. Thus, with the use of such works and a little forethought, it is possible to make a very large proportion of our organ voluntaries appropriate pendants to the service. The last hymn, especially, will often give the cue. A piece based on a tune still fresh in people's minds will make an impression impossible at any other time.

The essence of success in such voluntaries is the familiarity of the subject-matter and the ease with which it is identified. This applies to works other than those based on hymn tunes. For example, if on the Feast of the Annunciation we play an arrangement of Arcadelt's *Ave Maria*, we make a successful choice, because the music is not only beautiful (even when played instead of sung) but also familiar to most of those who hear it. They will enjoy it as abstract music, with the added pleasure that one derives from an apt quotation. But if we play either of Max Reger's two organ pieces entitled *Ave Maria* we edify nobody. It is not merely a question of musical value, though in this instance there will be few of us who will not prefer the old Fleming to the young German. It is a matter of association of

ideas. We may affect superior scorn of such things, but surely if by taking a little thought we can interest our congregations in good organ music, we should do so. Even on the most sordid of grounds it is good policy. The greater the public interest in organ-playing the better for the organist.

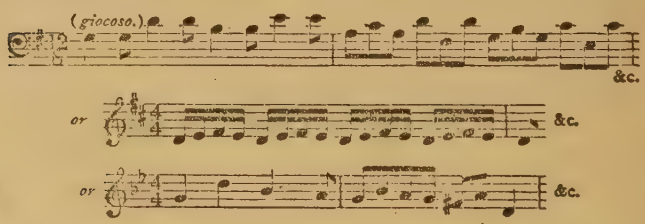
This interest can be quickened and maintained by the simple expedient of printing a list of the voluntaries for the month in the parish magazine, or by announcing them Sunday by Sunday on the notice-board at the church door. This plan has the further merit of keeping the organist in good playing form. Having committed himself to a monthly list of good stuff (for he would hesitate to advertise himself as playing rubbish) he would somehow find time to practise. This is better for him (and his hearers) than an approximate performance of an old battle-horse dug out during the sermon.

Congregations are quicker than most of us imagine in detecting allusiveness. Sometimes they can even evolve it themselves with ludicrous results, as in a case that recently came under notice. The organist played a piece in which extensive use was made of a phrase strongly reminiscent of the once-popular chorus, *Get your hair cut.* Any chance of the similarity escaping notice was knocked on the head by the fact of the services that day being conducted by a visitor with flowing locks. Another amusing case was that of an organist who, at the end of a service of thanksgiving for the cessation of a devastating cattle plague, thoughtlessly played an arrangement of *Blest are the departed.* These are

trifles, but they show that congregations contain a fair percentage of acute listeners, and this being so, it may be well worth our while to take advantage of the fact.

Reverting for a moment to Bach, it is surely time that we organists gave up the idea that we should make a special point of playing his fugues in Advent and Lent.

Organists have presumably reasoned thus: "Bach is a composer of severe music, Lent and Advent are times when severity is in keeping, therefore Bach's music is suitable for Lent and Advent"—a statement of the case that appears to be logically sound, and would be so if the first of the premises read "Bach composed *nothing but* severe music." That was the old idea of Bach. We know him now, not only as a composer who plumbs the very depths of emotion but also as a writer of most delightful dance music. So when an organist says "Lent is on us, therefore I will play nothing but Bach," and at the end of services in which the dominant note has been solemnity, breaks forth gaily into:



we may well ask: "If this is severity, what, in Heaven's name, is gaiety?"

Finally, when we have satisfied all requirements as

to the appropriateness of a voluntary for the occasion, there remains the question: "Is it good music?" There is such a wealth of fine organ works available that the playing of pieces of low musical value is inexcusable. We have so often been told that there is little high-class organ music because Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, and other giants wrote none that many of us have almost come to believe it. In this, as in too many other matters, organists have been content to take the line of least resistance. It is a much easier and more popular proceeding to play light pieces and transcriptions of well-known pianoforte, operatic, and orchestral works, than resolutely to insist on the fact that the organ has now a splendid library of its own. From the nature of things, its best music is of a type that appeals rather less quickly than that of some other instruments. The more necessary is it for those who are jealous of its honour to persevere, despite the grumblings of our less-educated hearers. We have in the past considered the majority too much. The enthusiastic audiences at the Promenade and similar orchestral concerts are not very discriminating, but they do undoubtedly appreciate music of the highest class. Similarly, thanks to the courage of competition festival committees, we find choral societies of to-day singing and enjoying works of a kind that until recently they would have left severely alone. These are the people to whom we organists play week by week. Have we any right to suppose that they cannot appreciate organ music of as good a standard as the orchestral and choral works which they clearly enjoy? For our credit's sake—for a man is not more surely

known by the company he keeps than is an organist by the music he plays—we must improve. Besides, like our Italian friend whose handiwork is quoted above, we may some day entertain a Mendelssohn unawares.

CHAPTER XIII

RECITALS

THE organ recital is a kind of side-show in Church music, and was never so popular as it is to-day. Not many churches provided with good organs and organists are without more or less frequent recitals. In some cases these have been carried on in series for a good many years without a break, and have taken high rank amongst musical happenings. A recent development that is full of promise in several ways is the short recital before the Sunday evening service. This is really an extension of the involuntary, and, like the congregational practice held at the same time, has three important points in its favour: it finds people and player more or less on the spot, and so involves no special journey; it fills up in a profitable and seemly manner what is usually an odd half-hour; and it undoubtedly adds to the attractiveness of the parish church on a Sunday evening. The keen organist welcomes it as an opportunity of playing a good deal of music that is either too long or in some other way unsuitable for use as a voluntary.

In some churches the Sunday evening recital takes place after the service, and ranges from a longish voluntary to a solid half-hour programme. The choice of time depends on the extent to which the congregation is parochial. In cases where the people

have a bus or railway journey to make, it seems easier to get them to come early than to stay late.

The main thing to remember in choosing a programme for recitals thus connected with a service is that in one case we are leading up to the service and in the other leading away from it. Thus a recital before evensong may contain light music provided that it be at the beginning of the programme. We should grow more serious and subdued as we proceed, ending always with a piece of the type that would be chosen as a good in-voluntary. The post-service recital, of course, should work out the other way. Beginning with a dignified diapason movement to break the shock, we may end with as blazing a brilliance as we can manage.

Obviously we should make the most of our opportunity in the choice of pieces that have a connection with the Sunday or Church season. It will often be easy to add greatly to the interest of the programme by including a work based on a hymn tune sung at the service. The occasional co-operation of the choir will be desirable. Sometimes a choral work too long for use at the service may be made the chief item at the recital with great success.

There is a good deal more in the drawing up of a programme than many of us suppose. I have recently spent a good deal of time over a big collection of programmes (including two volumes devoted to municipal recitals in America) and as a result have noted a few points that may be worth consideration.

In regard to the arrangement of historical programmes, is it wise to play the items in chronological order? Here, for example, is a programme of

English organ music, in which we begin (appropriately) with John Bull, and proceed by gradual and, it must be confessed, rather dull stages to a couple of items by living composers. I remember attending a similar recital, at which we reached the modern English works after about an hour of Bull, Blow, Purcell, Crotch, Russell, Stanley, and other old worthies. When the modern music came on, we were too tired to enjoy it. Many of us have listened with delighted surprise to some of this old English music. If we examine the programmes of such occasions, we shall generally find that it made its effect chiefly because it was unlike the rest of the music played. After a long and complex modern work, some simple piece by Russell or Stanley, played on a few quiet diapasons, comes as rare and refreshing fruit.

Here, surely, is a principle too often lost sight of in framing programmes. Why lead gradually from a serious work to a light one? Why shirk the sudden change? A light movement loses some of its essential quality unless preceded by its opposite. The slow movement and *scherzo* of a symphony are so placed as to provide relief to the listener. There is no fixed order. We find in one case the first movement is followed by an *adagio*, and in another by a *scherzo*. If we look at the sequence of movements in the *Eroica* and the Choral Symphonies, we shall see at a glance why Beethoven adopted a different order in each case.

Very far from this ideal is a programme before me in which three fugues are played consecutively. As if that were not enough, the recitalist has actually chosen three in E flat, one of them being

"St Anne"! The Bach example alone would provide enough of both form and key.

It is a generally admitted principle that in all but very short programmes one big work should be included. Where should it be placed? Practical considerations point to the middle of the programme. The audience would be at its maximum, the late-comers having all arrived and the early-goers not having yet begun silently stealing away. Player and hearers would have had time to get warmed up and be on terms with one another. Nevertheless, a surprisingly large number of recitalists elect to end a long programme with a complete sonata or symphony.

Apropos of sonatas and symphonies, there is a growing tendency to play portions only—a wise plan. Few organ recitals last longer than an hour, and unless a more or less trained audience be present it is not advisable to spend the greater part of the available time over one work. Exception may be made when the movements are short, varied, and specially attractive:—*e.g.* Widor's Fourth Symphony or Guilmant's First Sonata.

When our recitalists play separate movements of the greater works of Bach it is noticeable that they usually work on the plan of playing the fugues only save in the cases of the toccatas in F and D minor (Dorian) and the Passacaglia. I believe that many new Bach enthusiasts would be made if our leading recitalists would for a time give some of the more hackneyed fugues a rest, and play (and repeat) the great Preludes in E flat, E minor, B minor, and G major (Book 8, Novello's Edition). The preludes

in C major (*Book 3*) and F minor are also sufficiently big to stand alone, and are attractive pieces. The noble Dorian fugue deserves more frequent performance, and the fugue in F, at present overshadowed by the toccata, is unduly neglected. As a pendant to the toccata, it is somewhat of an anticlimax (could any fugue be otherwise?), but played alone at a good pace it has an attractiveness of its own. And when we separate the Passacaglia and Fugue, why should the latter always be the unplayed half? The Fugue has yet to win popular appreciation. It can hardly do so until it is frequently heard as a self-contained fugue on two subjects.

Before leaving Bach I venture to suggest that some of his less-inspired works might with advantage give place to a good fugue of native origin. Among the older examples are some sterling ones by the Wesleys.

Mention was made above of the need for repeating works. As a rule we are too timid in this respect. Players who give regular series of recitals should endeavour to make at least half-a-dozen important works thoroughly familiar during a session. If this consists of twelve recitals, each programme should contain one of these works, which would thus receive two performances. An even better plan would be to ring the changes in such a way that the six chosen pieces should be played three times. An extreme case in the other direction is that of a recitalist who recently gave a series at which a thousand pieces were played without one being repeated. He was proud of the feat, too.

It is good to see that programme notes are being

more and more used. The best organ music needs this kind of aid much more than many items which receive analysis at orchestral concerts. The cost of printing is a difficulty, but a few carefully worded lines would be sufficient in most cases. Very often sufficient space may be saved by shortening titles, etc. For example, instead of:

Chorale Prelude, "Valet will ich dir geben" *J. S. Bach*

we might say:

Prelude on the tune known in England as "St Theodulph" (*A. & M.* 98). (Theme in bass) *Bach*

or:

Prelude on the melody sung in England to "All glory, laud, and honour." (Theme in bass) *Bach*

This needs only a few more words than the usual method, and interests the hearer by telling him what to expect and where to look for it.

We might well do far more in this way. Several of the programmes before me simply announce

Sonata . . . . . *Rheinberger*

The titles of the movements should of course be given, and when one of the movements leads without break into another the fact should be stated.

The average hearer would enjoy the more severe types of organ music far more if he knew something about them. He can be enlightened as to the general plan of (say) a passacaglia or canon in very few words. Dates of a composer's birth and death

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

A little practical point in drawing up a programme: Write the names of the items on slips of paper, and play a kind of "patience" game with the slips until you have got them into the right sequence. Then write out our programme for the printer. This method saves time and avoids muddled "copy."

Without going into the question of foreign titles, we may note in passing the absurdity of announcing *Variations Poétiques*, *Un Rêve*, or *Traume*, when the composer bears an unmistakably English name. And we may be sure that some of the audience who consulted a programme which promised them an *Interlude sur un vieil air Anglais* received less help than they had a right to expect.[1]

English composers are doing well in writing organ music round native hymn tunes, but why should they call them chorale preludes? An English hymn tune is not a chorale.

Even if composers avoid the German title, recitalists often insist on it. I notice some English organ music of this type announced as chorale preludes, although the title-page says nothing of the kind. Even Franck's Three Chorals do not escape. Before me lie (in more senses than one) programmes which announce:

Choral Prelude . . . . *Cesar Franck*

A far more true description would be:

Theme (or Choral) with Variations

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[1] But we must bear in mind that some foreign titles are best left alone. For example, "*Grand Chœur*" does not mean "Grand Chorus," nor is an "*Antienne*" an "anthem."

Why not get rid of our Teutonic obsession, and use Franck's own title ?

Reverting to programme notes, the one piece of information they should *not* convey is that concerning the great technical difficulty of the work. This is a little lapse by no means rare. Akin to this is :

Grand Toccata in F (with Pedal Solos) . *Bach*

There is more than a suspicion of "swank" about such methods.

Random statements, however picturesque, should be avoided—*e.g.* :

Fugue in E flat on the hymn tune "St Anne" . *Bach*

and :

This wonderful Prelude of Rachmaninoff is a thrilling tone-picture of a man buried alive. The three loud notes represent his knocking at the coffin-lid.

Directions to the audience as to the importance of silence, and of leaving the building between the various items, are increasingly used. Most emphatic is the admonition, in large capitals, on the programmes of some lunch-hour recitals in a colonial city. It comes with especial force on one programme in particular :

"Improvisation representing a Storm"

SILENCE PLEASE !

If this particular "storm" was no better than some we have sat through, the command was issued to the wrong party.

This seems an opportune moment to express something of what a good many church organists feel about concert recitalists of the popularity-at-any-price type.

The average well-equipped church player is by education and environment a musician of serious tastes. Often he has a small or indifferent organ. Compelled to earn the bulk of his income by teaching or business, he has little time to acquire or maintain a brilliant technique. He has, however, at his finger-ends a fair repertory of genuine organ music of a good and serious kind, suitable for playing in connection with services. If he gives occasional recitals, he probably bears in mind that he is playing in a church and not in a concert hall, and will choose his music accordingly. When a concert recitalist of the baser type visits his town, plays on an organ with ten times the tonal and mechanical resources of his own modest instrument, and brings down the house with some kind of storm, Batiste's *Andante in G*, the *William Tell* Overture, or Variations on *The Old Folks at Home* (I have seen these four in one programme !), can we wonder at the church organist feeling somewhat discouraged and bitter ? For the man in the pew on Sunday was perhaps the man in the Town Hall on Saturday. I can hear him saying, as he leaves the church during a piece of real organ music : "Organ-playing ? You should have heard that chap at the Town Hall last night ! Made the organ speak, he did, abso*lute*ly. Played a storm too—— You could fairly imagine yourself out in it : almost made me turn me coat collar up, 'twas so real. I don't reckon anything of this chap at the church—dry, *I* call him."

I do not think this is an exaggeration of the popular state of mind on the subject. In the matter of music the public knows what it likes, but it knows little else.

It is not given to discrimination. An organ recital *is* an organ recital: if the recital of A pleases and excites, and that of B seems tame in comparison, the public is quite sure that B is in every way far inferior to A. If church organists ever feel inclined to say hard things of concert organists, it is because of the *ad captandum* programmes of a section of the latter. At the same time, let it be admitted handsomely that the conscientious church organist suffers in the same way from some of his own craft. What is the good of the organist of St Praxed's trying hard to get his congregation to appreciate the best of organ music when his rival at St Abinadab's round the corner has no other aim than "to give the public what it likes," and being under the impression that the public likes slush, ladles it out accordingly?

Not long since a well-known municipal organist protested against church organists trespassing on the concert organist's preserves by playing light music, much of which "should never be heard within the four walls of a place of worship, because it is avowedly secular."

We need not revive that never-to-be-settled question of what constitutes sacred or secular music. But it may be pointed out that an organist giving a recital in a church quite apart from any religious ceremony may surely be allowed considerable latitude. What is needed is more differentiation between (*a*) music played as voluntaries; (*b*) recitals given before or after a service, and which are therefore merely an extension of the voluntary; and (*c*) recitals given independently. In the first we should certainly be on the subdued and severe side; in the second we may

relax, and in the third we may play practically any light music that is good, provided it is free from too aggressively secular associations. (An arrangement of a popular item that is going the round of the piano-organs, or the restaurant, theatre, or cinema orchestras is an example of the kind of thing that should be avoided, however good musically.)

Would our municipal friend object to a church recitalist playing the Scherzo from Widor's Fourth Symphony, or Wolstenholme's Sketch in G or Allegretto in E flat, or Hollins's overtures in C major and C minor, or any of the scores of similar works by various composers? They are light, though good music; but I fear they cannot be considered to be other than "avowedly secular." If the playing of them is poaching on the concert organists' preserves, many of us will go on being unrepentant marauders, though it is to be hoped that we shall confine our offences to such occasions as (*c*) in the paragraph above.

Both church and concert players have many interests in common, the repertories of both overlap, and both have great opportunities and responsibilities in regard to the musical education of the public, from choir boys up (or down) to town councillors. Is it too much to hope that they will fulfil their responsibilities in such a way as to increase public esteem not only for their instrument, but for its music?

CHAPTER XIV

ARRANGEMENTS

Not many years ago a very influential minority of our profession looked on organ arrangements with disfavour, but to-day the objectors are so few as to be negligible.

The changed attitude of the Royal College of Organists is significant. In its early days, when candidates for Associateship were allowed to choose their own test pieces, one who elected to play a transcription would have come badly off, the syllabus expressly stipulating that the work be "written for organ." Nowadays the Council includes one transcription in its Fellowship test pieces. More; in recent years members of the Council have given lectures on the subject, with a view to helping organists to make their own transcriptions. This is a complete right-about-face—much as if the powers-that-be converted the Old Bailey into a lecture-room, with Mr Justice Darling holding classes for instruction in the higher branches of crime.

The organ arrangement, having been thus blessed where formerly it was banned, has come to stay, and on many grounds it may be heartily welcomed. Just as heartily to be condemned, however, are the tendencies (*a*) to arrange for the organ music quite unsuited to the instrument, and (*b*) to play an undue proportion of transcriptions.

If there were a scarcity of real organ music, ancient and modern, and of the highest class, arrangements would be a necessity. The most enthusiastic of transcribers will surely not assert that there is such a dearth, and arrangements to some extent therefore have to justify themselves. This they may do, firstly, by bringing to frequent hearing compositions of the older school which for various reasons are neglected. For example, there is a wealth of charming old music for the various obsolete keyed instruments. Much of this may be played with admirable effect on the lighter organ stops. Some of it is even more suited to the organ than to the pianoforte. Indeed, the music composed for a two-manual harpsichord is barely possible on any other instrument than the organ. There is also much old music for strings which well bears transference.

Secondly, organ arrangements may be useful in making the public familiar with modern works which otherwise might rarely come to their ears. The average member of the average church congregation, knowing little of Debussy, may be helped in this way, since about twenty of his works are now available for organ use, and most of them lose very little by being transcribed. The pianoforte pieces even gain in some respects. For instance, the pedal organ gives a sustained bass over which shifting harmonies may be played with greater clearness than on the pianoforte, where the most careful use of the damper pedal can hardly avoid some confusion. There is also the advantage of being able to use more than one tone-colour. Much modern pianoforte music that is not specially pianistic in idiom may be thus

brought to the ears of people who rarely frequent pianoforte recitals.

Thirdly, organists in districts where orchestral concerts are few and far between may do good work by acting as substitutes, and providing their hearers with transcriptions of good orchestral music.

Here, then, are the three justifications for transcriptions: (*a*) the keeping alive of good old music, (*b*) the making known of good new works, and (*c*) the deputising for the orchestra when necessary.

All this, of course, is with the proviso that the arrangement does the minimum of violence to the composer's ideas, and that it is suitable to its new medium.

One is glad to know that many organists are doing good work by their use of arrangements under these conditions, and with gain to their own musicianship. Indeed, arrangements deserve a welcome, if only for the service they have done the player. No organist who has given a good rendering of a transcription of a work for strings is ever likely to be satisfied with the slovenly phrasing that is too often a feature of organ-playing. In the matter of balance and colour, too, he will be all the better for the study of arrangements. Altogether, such playing will do much to help him out of the groove into which he is liable to settle.

When one considers how generally the principle of adaptation has been recognised by composers of all ages, it is surprising that there should ever have been any considerable objections to arrangements. Those who still have any lingering scruples may be reminded of the Schübler set of choral

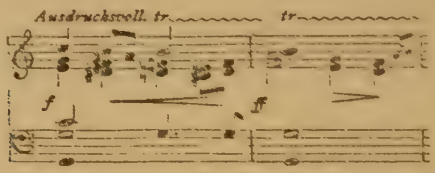
preludes, in which we see Bach taking vocal numbers and transferring them to the key-board, in some cases without altering a note. Handel's readiness to transcribe his own (and other people's) music is well known. Appropriately, he has also provided more matter for the hand of the arranger than has any other composer. His choruses are now so rarely used as organ solos that we can hardly realise the vogue they once had. Some idea may be gathered from a ponderous volume at my elbow, 14 in. by 10½ in., bound in thick cloth boards. It contains 130 choruses, filling 360 pages, and the arch-arranger, W. T. Best, is responsible for it. It was published by Cocks & Co. at £2, 2s. to subscribers and £3, 3s. to others.

Add to these 130 choruses the countless versions of Handel's instrumental movements (Best's Handel Album alone contains about a hundred) and one sees that not only did the obsession of George Frederic check our native school of composition but that his blighting shadow fell across the organ-loft as well. Long before the Best arrangements appeared, the choruses were regularly played by our organists. Is it any wonder that an English school of organ music is still a vision? While our forefathers were playing "organised" Handel, the Germans were busy with real organ music. They have an unbroken line from Bach's predecessors down to Karg-Elert. The French school, though of recent growth, is already in being, and highly characteristic. The English organ composer has no tradition, and has only lately shown signs of making one.

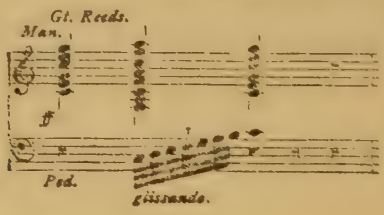
The greatest bar to his doing so is the influence of

the transcription—always far more used in England than on the Continent. As a result of the elaborate arrangements of the music of Wagner, Tschaikovsky, Dvorak, Brahms, etc., our composers often write for the organ in the idiom of the orchestra. This is only one of the evil results we owe to the abuse of a good thing. As was said above, such arrangements do good service in popularising music which would otherwise be rarely heard, and their use in the more remote provincial towns is justifiable. They had their place in London musical life some years ago, but now that orchestral concerts are plentiful, they are superfluous. If they dealt with less familiar works one would not complain; but they travel over the ground worn smooth by many seasons of Promenade Concerts. It was never part of an organist's duty to help in doing to death a few popular works. Still less is it the case now, with the picture-theatre orchestras and pianists able and willing to do the job more thoroughly. *Elizabeth's Prayer*, *Lohengrin's Farewell*, *The Bridal Chorus*, Prayer from *Rienzi*, *Procession to the Minster*, "*O Star of Eve*," *Album-leaf*—what have such things as these to do with the real Wagner? Would they ever be heard to-day had the composer written nothing after *Tannhauser*? Yet some of our leading recitalists are not above dishing up such inanities. Together with a certain Prelude in C sharp minor, a *Chanson Triste*, a Cavatina—there is no need to give the composers' names, since there is but one Prelude, one Cavatina, and one *Chanson Triste*—with these and other threadbare favourites, the early Wagner extracts have earned a long, long rest, so far as the organ is concerned.

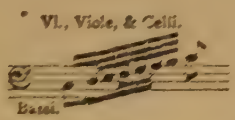
Of the bigger Wagner transcriptions it may be said that many come under the head of disarrangements. The rendering producible by the finest organist on the finest organ is but a pale reflection to those who have heard the work in its proper form. No organ can give us, as can the strings, a gradual *crescendo* from a whisper to a *fortissimo*. Consider, too, the organ stops that do duty for the brass. Where is the shattering *sforzando*, or the growth from a velvety murmur to a blast, which are commonplaces with the brass family of the orchestra? As a typical passage, take these two bars from the *Meistersinger* overture:

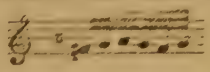


Who can fail to be stirred by the *crescendo* and *fortissimo* of the passage in thirds for the brass? Passages in which the effects are mainly dynamic become comparatively tame when transferred to the organ. In several respects this overture suffers rather badly at the arranger's hands. One of the best known organ versions gives us this:



Now, Wagner gave the scale passages to the strings (omitting first violin), and the chords to the brass and wood-wind. When played by the orchestra, the scales give one the impression of being lightly flicked across the solid mass of sound provided by the brass. They are a mere decoration. Moreover, Wagner, careful to avoid any lumbering or confused effect, gives the double basses the mere skeleton of the scale, thus:



And we are asked to accept for this a noisy pedal *glissando*, with (through the great to pedal coupler) reeds and 16-foot speaking—or rather half-speaking. Much the same thing occurs later in the overture, where the first violins and violas have the figure  in octaves, against the chords of the brass. When played by the orchestra these passages are scarcely audible. Yet we usually hear them given to the great organ full. Another example of violence to a composer's intentions is to be found in a popular arrangement of the *Siegfried Idyll*, where a passage for one horn marked *f* is given to the solo organ reeds *ff*. And the *fortissimo* marks in the *tutti* passages are transferred to the organ version, regardless of the fact that a *fortissimo* of the combination for which Wagner wrote this particular work is a very different thing from that of a big modern organ.

Again, I remember a passage in a string quartet, marked *ff*, being given in an organ arrangement to great *ff*. It would be easy to fill pages with a list of such vagaries. Many are due to the arranger's slavish adherence to the original. The best translation of a book is that which gives us, not an exact rendering but a good piece of literature in the new tongue. The less it smells of the process the better. Organ transcriptions should be, above all, satisfactory *qua* organ music. Our French friends set us a good example in this respect. They are not afraid of omitting things, and rarely do we find their arrangements other than clear. Many English transcriptions suffer from the arranger's attempt to retain as much as possible of the original. The result too often is that we cannot hear the music for the notes. Double pedal, both hands "thumbing"—what has the nose done that it should not lend a hand, so to speak?

There is nothing to be urged in defence of programmes entirely devoted to transcriptions. It may be said that they attract the public, but surely that should not be the first consideration with an artist. Moreover, a man owes a duty not only to his art but to his professional brethren. Here, for example, is A, doing his best to educate his hearers in the matter of real organ music, giving them the best of both ancient and modern. Along comes B, and plays a programme of transcriptions of hackneyed works. Of course the average hearer prefers it to the sterner fare of A, and the cause of good organ music receives another set-back.

For a sample, take this programme played in

London by a well-known recitalist: *1812* Overture, "O Star of Eve" (*Tannhäuser*), Prelude to Act III., and Bridal Music (*Lohengrin*), Overture, *Rienzi*, *Peer Gynt* Suite, *Chant sans paroles* (Tschaikovsky), and March (*Tannhäuser*) — every item a chestnut!

It is amusing to note that some recitalists who make a feature of such schemes as the above regard players of real organ music as being behind the times, holding the odd view that Wagner and Tschaikovsky programmes are necessarily more up to date. When they make acquaintance with the organ music of Vierne, Karg-Elert, Jongen, Herbert Howells, Hillemacher, de Séverac, Saint-Saëns and a few others, they will see that arrangements of early Wagner are mere milk for babes. Such players are twenty years behind the average recitalist who keeps abreast with the music of his instrument.

Bach has given us so much organ music that there seems to be no need to play arrangements from his other works. Nevertheless we shall do well to show our recital audience something of the non-fugal and less serious side of the composer. We may do this by passing by the "48" and the "Art of Fugue," in favour of the suites, partitas, and concertos, from which we may draw some delightful airs and dance movements. Many of these come off well on the organ, lightly registered and in some cases without pedal. Such arrangements do far less violence to Bach than do the piano versions of the bigger organ works, because such purely organ effects as pedal solos, pedal points.

and chains of slow suspensions will not bear translation.

Nor do the big clavier works as a rule do other than lose a good deal when arranged for organ. Reger has laid violent hands on some of them, but in most cases has succeeded in merely giving us some technical ordeals. An exception is his version of the five-voice C sharp minor fugue from the "48," which is very effective on a big organ, though the pp ending is rather tame. In the prelude he has added an extra voice—a characteristic example of skilful superfluity.

There is a good deal to be said in favour of organists making their own transcriptions. The examples prepared for them by eminent recitalists are, as a rule, far too complex, and make demands in the way of registration that can be met only by players with large four-manual organs. Often the necessary modifications give as much trouble as would the making of a fresh arrangement. In the case of orchestral works an organist with a good knowledge of the score will save time and money and get a better result by playing from a carefully marked piano version. It may be worth while adding that familiarity with the score is a hindrance if it leads us to attempt too much in the way of reproduction of purely orchestral points. Our first aim should be to evolve a good piece of organ music—a translation rather than a copy.

Failure to realise the importance of this principle leads to some curious results in transcribing piano music. Thus an arrangement of Liszt's D-flat *Consolation* repeats the original so faithfully that

the left-hand part suddenly disappears in a passage where the composer obviously intended it to be sustained by the damper pedal. The arranger saw a blank stave and dared not fill it in.

A volume might be written on the art of transcription. A writer who sets out to supply us with such a book will find all the points dealt with in highly condensed fashion in a couple of lectures delivered by Dr Percy Buck at the R.C.O. in 1914. They are published *in extenso* with music type illustrations in the College Calendar for 1914-1915, and a *résumé* appeared in *The Musical Times* of May, 1914. The lectures cover the ground so completely that I have to choose between paraphrasing Dr Buck and sending the reader to him. The latter course is fairer and saves space.

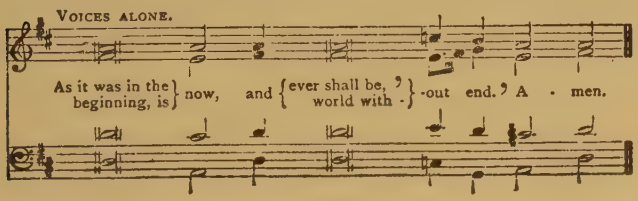
CHAPTER XV

CONVENTIONS

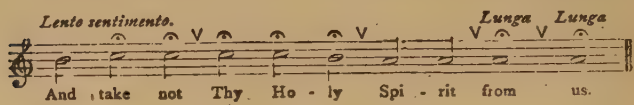
EVERY branch of the musical profession has its more or less absurd conventions. From some of the worst of these the church organist is happily exempt, chiefly because so little of his work is done in the public eye, and he therefore escapes a good deal of ritual that seems to be inevitable to the concert platform. But he has his fair share of musical mannerisms that badly need overhauling. Conventions there must be, of course, if things are to be done decently and in order. But we are apt to forget that what is convenient (using the word in its strict sense) at one time, is inconvenient—even harmful—at another. This is a truism, but only on the assumption of its being generally overlooked can we account for the survival of certain church service conventions. If we stood away from them, and brought them up for judgment on their musical merits, very few would survive.

Take the responses at Matins and Evensong as our first example. Is there any reason why these should ever be accompanied when the choir sings in harmony? The organ part is a mere duplication of the voice parts, and has no *raison d'être* beyond sustaining the pitch. If a choir cannot sing harmonised responses unaccompanied without losing the pitch they should be content with a unison setting. Yet we hear sometimes efficient cathedral choirs singing

Tallis with their excellent voices unnecessarily bolstered up by a diapason background. And can anybody give a reason for the absurd custom of prefacing each response with a pedal note? It is not required to help the choir as to what notes they are to sing. It ought not to be necessary to recall absent-minded choristers to the matter in hand. Nothing can be said for it on the score of beauty. So why use it? And why interpolate a pedal note after "is now" in the *Gloria Patri*? Probably it was first used to impress upon a careless choir that a break was to be made at that point. For the same reason we find in old anthems and services a rest filled in with a pedal thump. But surely our choirs can do without such an aid to counting. Why should it be possible to-day to hear this sort of thing: "(Boom!) *As* it *was* in the beginning is *now* (Boom!) *and* ever shall be," etc.—with a falseness of accentuation and a stiffness of rhythm beside which the worst of Anglican chanting is flexible? Surely the responses should be sung after the manner of good chanting. All the psalters tell us that good chanting is as near akin as possible to good reading. When we go to a cathedral, or to a church where these responses are sung, we have just cause for complaint when we hear the usual square-cut travesty, with minute-guns on the organ, instead of this:



And why should the last response be dragged out thus:



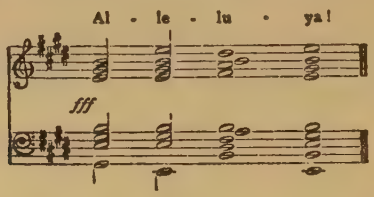
often with a wholly unwarranted second inversion of the chord of F at the word "Thy"?

Some irritating mannerisms are often present in the singing of the Litany. "Mīserable sinners" becomes "miserāble sinners," and where the 1544 English Litany is sung, we are generally doomed to twenty-one repetitions of false accent: thus, "We beseech Thee to hear US, good Lord," the implication being plainly that so long as *we* are heard, the rest of the populace may be ignored. It is a pity, too, that so few organists seem to realise how hearers who are sensitive in the matter of verbal rhythm suffer from the customary methods of singing such fragments of plain-song as the *Sursum Corda*, or certain phrases in Merbecke's Communion Service, "We lift them up unTOOO the Lord," "by Whom all *things*," instead of "*all* things" (the misplaced accent here being due to the fact that "things" happens to be set to a higher note than "all"), "Name *of* the Lord," "sins *of* the world," and so on. These small things are difficult to cure, and it must be admitted that we hear as many from the officiating clergy as from the choir. Still, it is depressing to reflect that thousands of people week after week are allowing their sense of verbal rhythm to become so blunted as to ignore false quantities that would never be allowed to pass in a good dramatic performance,

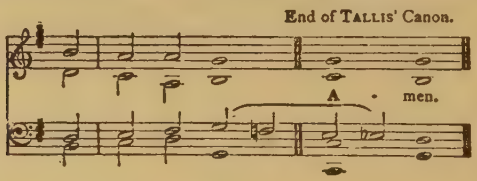
or even in ordinary conversation. This is one of the worst of our Church service conventions, and perhaps will never be swept away till careless and slovenly reading by the clergy is a thing of the past.

We organists are too apt to regard the "tyranny of the organ" cry as being directed solely against loud playing. Probably most musical members of our congregations would say that their complaint referred quite as often to our habit of playing too much. If our choir cannot be left unsupported during an occasional psalm or hymn, or even during the responses, we might surely trust them to sing Amen and monotone the Creed and Lord's Prayer unaided. And the parson who reads the Lessons ought to be able to reach the lectern without the accompaniment of a dying fall from the organ. Again, the Comfortable Words, if adequately sung, are best left unaccompanied: if they are not adequately sung, an organ part merely makes bad worse. Here, as in the case of the responses, the absence of organ tone makes the next entry of the instrument far more impressive. So few of us realise the value of the contrasts brought about by little economies of this kind that we may soon find the sermon being helped out by snatches of soft music. The Royal College of Organists has done much for Church music by rigorously testing candidates in playing and accompanying. Perhaps some day it will include in its syllabus non-playing and non-accompanying. The idea is less wild than it appears to be. On an Associate entering his name for the Fellowship test one of the examiners will pay a surprise visit to the candidate's church, and see

if he knows when to give his hands and feet a rest —especially his feet. The examiner will also note whether the aspirant has mastered the apparently difficult feat of playing a cadential dominant triad without adding the seventh. I recently heard an (otherwise) excellent musician give us this version of the final bars of the well-known tune from Palestrina set to "The strife is o'er":—



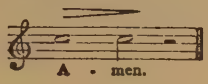
Even Amens, when sung in unison, are liable to improvement at the hands of the organist, the plagal form often being led into by a tonic seventh, and then emasculated by the sub-mediant being flattened:



Apropos of Amens is there any reason why these appendages to hymns should not be sung exactly as written? They are invariably doubled in length:

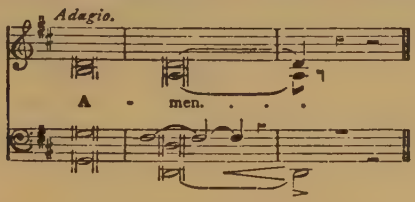
Possibly the first of these might strike us as being somewhat abrupt after the long-drawn version

to which we are accustomed. When we had been broken in, we should almost certainly go further, and find that



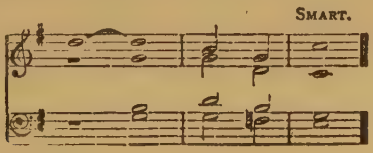
is best of all.

Anyway, whatever is sung, let it be begun and ended neatly. We ought to be able to dispense with

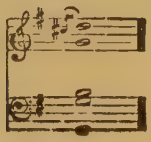


—welcome to nobody but the heavy bass, who showily plumbs the depths and sits there for an extra beat or two.

Some little tricks in the starting of things die very hard. We may still hear, at famous churches, or from eminent fingers, such old-fashioned vulgarities as the preliminary note:



the vulgar "click":



and the arpeggio:

Such methods *may* stimulate a choir, and insure a good attack, though it is not easy to see how, and indeed we shall not as a rule find them go hand in hand with neat starts. We know only that they are intensely annoying to musical listeners, and further they are heard nowhere but in church. We do not find any other than church choir singers so "helped." Whoever heard a choral society, even of the humblest, being "brought in" by such means? Or what orchestra begins or ends a piece other than with unanimity, save by accident? Some things that would cause a titter in the concert-room are amongst the hallowed customs of the organ-loft.

Those of us who are choirmasters as well as organists will help on the former and more important side of our work by deserting the console occasionally, and sitting in the choir, or among the congregation. We should instruct our deputy to reproduce as many of our effects as possible. Some useful discoveries will be made. For example, we may perhaps find that certain of our pet registrations for accompanying are either too loud or too soft, or not sufficiently definite to be of use to the choir. Seated among the congregation we shall really discover what kind of a choir we have been nourishing in our bosom. In a word, we shall gain a great

deal of useful knowledge in the matter of choir work and congregational singing that cannot be picked up in the seclusion of the organ-loft. A further gain is that our deputy will have the advantage of accompanying a full service in our presence—which ought to do him as much good as half a term's organ lessons. He will gain confidence and experience, and when we go for our holiday we shall leave in charge a very different kind of player from the one who gets no chance save at holiday time when half the choir is away and no competent critic is at hand.

And we shall do well to remember that this same deputy will, in the ordinary course of events, be sooner or later responsible for the music of a parish church. Like principal, like deputy. Are we to go on complacently propagating conventions, the worst of which are not received with derision merely because they are practised in church? Let us adapt and reproduce some of them at the annual concert given by our excellent choral society, and see what happens to our reputation.

CHAPTER XVI

HOBBIES

More than most musicians the church organist is liable to get into a groove.

The nature of his work tends to narrow his outlook. Year after year he must inevitably travel the same round: responses, chants, hymns, anthems—altogether hundreds of familiar items must be gone through each year. And to make matters worse the bulk of this music is necessarily of a more or less conventional character. The average member of our profession has little chance of adding to this repertoire. In the matter of organ music much the same state of things obtains. He does not make his living by playing difficult organ music. His main income is derived from his work as general practitioner. Therefore he goes the round of the organ music he learned in his early days, when he had more time for practising. He rarely has time to study the more modern school of organ music, so he sticks to his classics, with occasional novelties of a type that make small demands on player and listener. His attendances at concerts are few and far between, for the reason that his evenings are usually filled up with lessons or class work. In smaller provincial towns he has the further disadvantage of rarely hearing any other organ or choir than his own, and if a concert takes place he generally

bears a more or less important part in it. Thus unless he is on his guard, the tide of art goes on and leaves him high and dry. Perhaps no other musician runs the risk to such an extent. The orchestral player is constantly in touch with the greatest of music, classical and modern. The professional singer must now be prepared to take part in choral works other than Handel and Mendelssohn, and even in cases where no great variety of work is undertaken, vocal soloists have the bracing experience of constantly singing before fresh audiences, and under different conductors and conditions. Meanwhile the organist is tied to his church, and goes on his narrow round of service, choir practice, and lessons. Can we wonder if the mental and musical outlooks of so many of the profession become narrow?

Organists' Associations, by taking a man from his little corner in the world (even if it be only at monthly or quarterly intervals), and dropping him among comparative strangers with whom he may argue, and so learn that there are other points of view than his own, do a good work. Unfortunately the subject dealt with at meetings is usually a musical one. What the average organist needs is not more music, but more outside interests. The completest organist is he who is also in constant touch with at least one of the kindred arts. Organists' Associations would be even more useful if they led to gatherings of organists listening with rapt attention to papers on architecture, painting, or literature. They would be shocked if one suggested a political discussion, but many cobwebs would be cleared away, and the members

would return to their daily round braced, after a well-managed debate on some political or social question. For one thing, they would realise how small a part, after all, their art plays in the scheme of things. It is merely one of the trimmings of life, a pleasant one, perhaps the purest and best of all the trimmings, but at present, so far as popular appeal is concerned, of less importance than the picture show, variety theatre, or professional football. If we and our music disappeared to-morrow, the world would pitch a wreath after us, and go about its business and pleasure much as usual.

The organist at present is too often an organist only. He forgets that his organistship is a detail. Reverting for a moment to Organists' Associations, when they meet for musical discussion what is the kind of subject usually chosen? Too often it is one with which the members already have, or should have, full acquaintance—the training of choirs, organ-playing, transcriptions, congregational singing, and so on. If musical subjects be chosen, they should deal with branches of the art with which the organist is likely to have little to do—chamber music, opera, modern harmonic tendencies, and the like. It would be even better to drop music altogether on some occasions, and meet for consideration of other subjects, or for social intercourse—always being careful that the latter does not end in the association becoming a Mutual Admiration Society. A Mutual Recrimination Society would be much more interesting, and really not without its uses.

There is a custom springing up of late years of

musicians spending their holidays in talking shop, and generally setting the musical world to rights. A musician, tired and stale, and seeking the best kind of holiday, should go off with two or three men who are not musical. An organist who spent a month camping with a lawyer, a doctor, and an inspector of weights and measures, all of whom were in the happy condition of scarcely knowing one tune from another, would come back to work avid, and knowing many more things than he did before he set out.

In musical matters, every organist should be proficient in some branch other than that by which he boils the pot. It would do him a world of good to join an orchestral society, or a madrigal choir, and take his place in the rank and file—he who is so accustomed to directing others. His organ-playing will gain in the matter of phrasing if he can sing, or play the violin; his perception of rhythm will be developed by even occasional playing of timpani. But above all, he should be a reader of books, and especially poetry and other works from which the imaginative side of him might draw some sustenance. A musician who is not a Browningite is surely a contradiction in terms. One who has never read *Abt Vogler*——! Let me quote a few lines from the same poet's *Shop*:

> . . . And so did day wear, wear, till eyes
> Brightened apace, for rest was earned:
> He locked door long ere candle burned.
> And whither went he? Ask himself,
> Not me! To change of scene, I think.
> . . . . . .

I want to know a butcher paints,
A baker rhymes for his pursuit,
Candlestick-maker much acquaints
His soul with song, or, haply mute,
Blows out his brains upon the flute!

We may not be anxious to decorate our walls with the results of the butcher's painting, but he will be the better butcher for his hobby. To the mere butcher a round of beef is just so much fat and lean food, to be disposed of as quickly as possible. To the butcher-painter it is something more, and in the customary slap of his broad knife with which he bids it farewell there will be a lurking appreciation of its colour-scheme—a pretty arrangement of red and white with a delicate grain, at which he will try his hand next early-closing day.

We shall be the better organists if we rhyme for our pursuit, or try to beat the butcher's daubs.

The social position of the organist is much higher than it was twenty years ago, chiefly because his duties are more important and better paid. But he is still far from being a complete social success, because he can as a rule talk on no subject but music. It is good to see that the syllabus of the Royal College of Organists recognises the importance of widening the organist's outlook, by including a literary test. But this hardly goes far enough. Inasmuch as the examinee knows beforehand what book his two-hundred-words essay is to deal with, it is merely a test in writing fair English. How much better it would be if every candidate went up prepared to answer questions on English literature generally! This is not asking too much. Any man who claims

to be even fairly educated should be able to meet such a catechism with no special preparation.

Some day we may go even farther, and test the candidate's ability to hold his own in general conversation by a series of questions such as the following:—

1. Say briefly what you think of Mrs Battle's opinion on her favourite game. What feature in a rival game did she condemn as vulgar? Speculate as to her attitude towards Bridge (the game, not the examiner).

2. What are your views on (*a*) the l.b.w. rule, (*b*) the present method of deciding the County Championship, and (*c*) the League system in local cricket?

3. Compare Shaw, Chesterton and Belloc.

4. Give a brief critical appreciation of O. Henry.

5. Who is Mr Dooley? Give, in the Dooley idiom, your views on a topic of the day.

6. Describe the effect of temperament in the cases of Billy Wells, Carpentier, and Beckett.

7. In which of Thomas Hardy's books do we read of a church band conveying alcoholic refreshment to the gallery on Christmas day with disastrous results? Give the name of the disreputable tune they played on being suddenly roused for the hymn after the sermon. What did the squire say? Give your views as to how far such regrettable lapses may be prevented by (*a*) Prohibition; (*b*) State purchase; (*c*) a higher development of moral teaching.

8. Compare the train and the motor-bus as a means of transport in London suburbs.

9. Compare Rugby and Association football as a

spectacle. Explain the terms line out, throw in, knock on, finding touch, wing half, heeling out, and packing.

Candidates failing to answer at least three of the above questions should be asked to try again, no matter how excellent their musical qualifications.

CHAPTER XVII

FOR AND AGAINST PLAIN-SONG

ALTHOUGH plain-song is steadily advancing in favour, and is being studied more generally and sympathetically than ever before, it still labours under some disabilities. To many it smells of Popery, and is promptly damned on that account alone. Samuel Sebastian Wesley's amusing letter to an inquiring pupil is significant:

"Your question about Gregorian Tones has caused me much pain. I thought I had made a better musician of you. I am sorry for this. I beg to assure you that I am a Musician, a Protestant, and Yours truly, S. S. WESLEY."

Bearing in mind the prevailing ignorance on the subject at that time, we need not attach much importance to Wesley's objections on musical grounds. Given our opportunities of studying and hearing plain-chant, a man with Wesley's sense of the strong and dignified in Church music would assuredly have been speedily converted. The really important word in the letter is "Protestant." We must remember, too, that the most earnest plain-song revivalists at that time were parsons and ecclesiastically minded laymen with more zeal than knowledge. I have read somewhere of a vicar who was so fond

of the psalm tones that he conversed with his wife in inflections, and held a Gregorian festival by his own fireside with a choral force consisting of the cook, a couple of servant girls, and a boy in buttons. Advocacy of this kind could hardly do other than prejudice the professional musician unfavourably. To-day, happily, we find many of our leading musicians both in and out of the Church interested in the revival of this old music, and composers of various schools are showing themselves fully alive to the charm of its modal and rhythmical characteristics. Apart from the "Protestant" objection, perhaps the cause of plain-song now suffers most from some of its devotees' insistence on its antiquarian and historical side. They forget that antiquaries and trained musicians form but a very insignificant proportion of our congregations. What the average man needs is not lectures on the origin and antiquity of plain-song so much as demonstrations of its fitness for regular use in our services. He is apt to point out that there is no virtue in mere age, else a shop egg would be esteemed a delicacy. But if you begin by convincing him by the evidence of his ears that this old music is pre-eminently fitted for a particular purpose, and then show that, in addition to this fitness, it has the added weight that comes from generations of use, you will be in a fair way to making a convert.

A short time ago I met an old friend who had stood by my side and sung Anglican chants when we were boys together. He has remained faithful to that type of Church music ever since, it being the only kind with which he is familiar. He was

bitterly complaining that he and his colleagues were threatened with plain-song. He had protested in the manly and effective way adopted by choirmen when faced with the uncongenial—that is to say, he had handed in his resignation. He opened his mind to me very fully. Briefly put, here is his case, and it may be taken as typical: Plain-song is (*a*) monotonous; (*b*) dull; (*c*) ugly; (*d*) not music at all, but crude and barbarous attempts at music; (*e*) its revival is putting back the hands of the clock; (*f*) it is uninteresting to the choir.

When people say that plain-song is monotonous they generally refer to its use in chanting the psalms, so we will consider it in that connection.

In the first place, have we not rather misled people by speaking of *singing* the psalms? If we remember that chanting is merely reading with inflections, we shall have a much clearer idea as to the method of performance; more important still, we shall make no mistake as to the kind of variety to be aimed at, which is rhythmical rather than melodic.

There are three ways of reading the psalms: (*a*) the go-as-you-please method, with each reader a law to himself as regards pitch, accent, and inflection; (*b*) the monotone; (*c*) a mixture of monotone and inflection—the latter now being reduced to a system instead of being improvised by the individual. This third method is known as chanting, or singing, and the farther we get away from the ideas suggested by these terms, and the more we regard the process as organised and inflected reading, the nearer we shall approach an ideal performance.

It is obvious that the most satisfactory formulæ for use as inflections will be those that approach most nearly to the involuntary cadences used by the average speaker. Take the simplest form of plain-song, the versicles and responses, as examples. It will be noticed how inevitable and natural these are. We may frequently find their naturalness proved in a most convincing fashion. Listen to school children repeating any formula, whether it be the Creed or the multiplication table. Nominally, they monotone it; actually, in course of time, they unanimously adopt a system of rising and falling accents almost exactly on the lines of the responses.

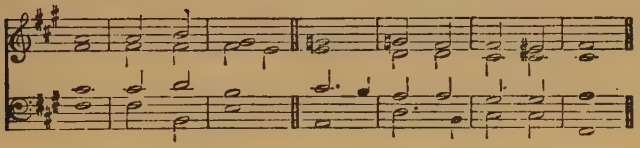
The same kind of thing is to be found in some of the old street cries. We have all heard a hawker apparently breaking forth into ecclesiastical song, when he was really only crying his wares, and adopting such inflections as would make his call more arresting. The plain-song psalm tones possess just this easy naturalness.

It is of course a truism that any musical phrase that has to be repeated many times *must* be simple. It may be taken as axiomatic that the more striking the phrase—whether as to melody, harmony or rhythm—the less well does it bear repetition. In chanting the psalms we are faced with the fact that the musical setting has to be provided for any number of verses from four to seventy-six. With a plain-song tone, the melodic simplicity, the absence of fixed harmony, the freedom of rhythm, and the fact of the last note frequently suggesting a half-close rather than a cadence, enable us to go through a long psalm with no sense of monotony. As to

rhythm, in a psalm of thirty verses we find hardly two with a similar scheme, whereas with an Anglican chant you will hear this rhythm thirty times:

Moreover, the latter has a definite musical form, fixed harmony, a full close, and often a striking progression that, pleasing for a few verses, ends in becoming wearisome. Take, for example, the well-known chant of Wesley—one of the most beautiful ever written:

Ex. 1



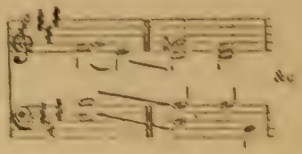
This little piece of music contains as much charm as could well be packed into such a small compass. But its most effective point—bar 4—when it had been recited on for many verses would become a burden to all but the most unmusical listener.

Dvorák, Sir Charles Stanford tells us, was driven nearly crazy by his first experience of Anglican chanting, which he described as a barbarous repetition of a poor tune. As a matter of fact, even a good tune cannot survive the ordeal of some dozens of *da capo*. Perhaps the real trouble, however, is the insistence on one little rhythmic formula. Heroic efforts are sometimes made to sing it with the freedom of good plain-song chanting. Sometimes a fair measure of success is attained, though the fact of the choir singing in harmony makes complete

success impossible. Moreover, there is one step towards freedom that cannot be taken in Anglican chanting, and that is the elision of the reciting note to meet the case of a very short half-verse. In adapting a plain-song tone, a *note* only is removed: in adopting an Anglican chant a *chord* has to come out, and this is possible only when the harmony happens to allow of such a proceeding.

If, for example, we wish to elide the reciting chord in the second half of the Wesley chant, we have this progression left:

Ex. 2.



Such short half-verses as "O Lord," "Beasts and all cattle," "Mountains and all hills," "Shall serve me," "Thy salvation," "For who doth hear," and many others, can only be rendered with correct accentuation by shortening the chant accordingly. You will find very few Anglican chants that will admit of this cutting of the coat according to the cloth.

But perhaps the most unkind blow at the Anglican chant is dealt in the house of its friends, who are always crying out for new ones. Plain-songites are content with their mere handful of convenient and time-honoured inflections. They would decline without thanks the offer of a Ninth Tone, even as they have no use for new settings of the responses or *Sursum Corda*. But your Anglican chanter is

like the daughter of the horseleech, ever crying out for more. You may provide a choir with the best collection yet published, but it will not serve for long. Inquire a year later, and you will find the choirmaster has started compiling a MS. book, with some tasty efforts of his own, or the vicar's wife's, or of some amateurs in the congregation. It is a solemn thought that long after you and I have resolved our final discord, composers at present in their nurses' arms, bald and toothless, with no language but a cry and no action but a stagger and a clutch, will still be writing Anglican chants.

After all, there need never be any shortage. When the supply of original ideas gives out (and there are signs that the day is fast approaching) there is the whole of musical literature at our disposal for adaptation, after the manner of the notorious perversion of the slow movement of Beethoven's *Pathetic Sonata.*

I have no wish to belittle the merits of our national chant, considered as music. It is astonishing how much beauty some composers have managed to include in such a small compass. In many cases we may fitly apply the poet's words, and call it "a box where sweets compacted lie." But although these pleasing musical miniatures may be sung to metrical verse with delightful effect, they are too formal for use with prose, and hopelessly anachronistic when allied with the rugged prose-poetry of the psalms.

Now we come to the second objection: that plain-song is dull. It would be claiming too much to say that there is *no* dull plain-song. But, after all,

modern Church music is not *always* palpitating with life and interest. Even Peerybingle in B♭ has his dull moments. Still, because some modern music is dull we do not therefore condemn the whole of it. Plain-song suffers from various other kinds of injustice. For example, if a choir sings a service by Peerybingle very badly, the congregation does not blame Peerybingle. They blame the choir and sympathise with the composer. But if the same choir sings plain-song badly, the blame usually falls on the music and the sympathy goes to the choir.

The best answer to the charge of dulness is the fact that the ancient melodies to such hymns as "Sing, my tongue," "The Royal Banners," "Blessed city," "The Lamb's high banquet," etc., are now widely sung and appreciated. The one charge that cannot be brought against such vigorous tunes is surely that of dulness. There are scores of fine plain-song tunes that need only to be well known to be equally popular.

Then it is sometimes said that plain-song is ugly. Here of course we can see the reason for the complaint. The idiom of plain-song is unfamiliar, and we know that what is odd generally strikes us as being ugly. The objection usually dies a natural death on the music becoming familiar. There is, however, a vast quantity of plain-song that is quite tuneful even at first hearing. An unbiased study of the publications of the Plain-song and Mediæval Music Society will bring to light page after page of smooth, tuneful strains, so vocal that they almost sing themselves. The Introits for the year, the Ordinary of the Mass, and the various Sequences, are now available for

use in the English Church, and are a rich mine of pure melody that, adequately rendered, makes an instant appeal to all save those who have no ear for anything but the highly elaborate, chromatic, and sensational.

We come to one of the commonest of all arguments against plain-song—that it is not music at all, but an early, crude, and tentative attempt at music. It is an astonishing thing that this kind of remark is made by people who have received quite a good musical education. They imagine the case to be something like this: In the dark ages, when harmony was not discovered, and when there were no instruments, a few decrepit musicians tried to write tunes. They hadn't our beautiful modern major and minor scales, and the luxury of numerous sharps and flats was also denied them; for a long time they had no recognised system of notation. With such disadvantages they could hardly be very successful in their attempts at composition. They did their best according to their light, but their light were decidedly poor.

This objection is based on the fallacy that plain-song left off when harmonised and measured music began. As a matter of fact plain-song was being composed as recently as the seventeenth century; indeed, it would be possible to go on composing it to-day, but the results would probably be unsatisfactory. We are now so obsessed with harmonic considerations, and our sense of rhythm is so much influenced by the regular accent of measured music, that we are unable to appreciate the composition of pure melody with sufficient detachment.

What the anti-plain-song party does not seem to realise is that in the history of an art, though the general progress is slow, certain forms may reach perfection in very early days. At a time when practically all music was vocal and one-dimensional nothing was more natural than that the composition of melody should quickly attain a high degree of excellence. Exactly the reverse is the case to-day, when, music having made great progress in such matters as harmony, thematic development and instrumental colour, composers are becoming less and less inclined (or able) to write a melody of a good length. A case analogous to that of plain-chant is of course folk-song. Nobody, even the most modern of moderns, denies the charm of our old popular melodies. When we realise the antiquity of some of the most beautiful of these, we need not be surprised to find the same tuneful qualities in plain-song, much of which was contemporary, or very little earlier, in date. If we regard plain-chant as a kind of sacred folk-song, we shall perhaps approach it in the right spirit.

Then we are told that in using plain-song we are putting back the hands of the clock. Are we to apply that argument generally in musical matters? If we are to leave plain-song on the shelf because the art has made progress since it was composed, then Bach and Beethoven must go there as well. Where are we to draw the line? If we carry out the theory to its logical (and decidedly bitter) conclusion, we shall hear no music to-day but that of Schonberg and Stravinsky. The fact is that plain-song, like other music, must be judged purely on its merits as music

and on its practicability for use to-day. If it is good, it is so not because of its age, but in spite thereof. Works of art on which Time lays his hand in vain we call classical. Hitherto the term has been used only in connection with the works of the great masters. It may quite well be applied to the best examples of plain-song and its lay-sister folk-song.

The last objection may be dismissed in a few words. We are told that plain-song should not be used because it is uninteresting to the choir. The obvious answer is that the object of Church music is not to provide choirs with Pleasant Sunday Mornings and Evenings. It will be wise, however, to recognise that men and boys giving up a good deal of their spare time for choir work should not be expected to confine their efforts to plain-song. By all means let them devote their skill in part-singing to the best anthems and cantatas. (There is ancient precedent for elaborate choir music at the offertory.) Plain-song itself may be made palatable to the choir by means of the excellent faux-bourdon treatments that are available. They are delightful to hear, and engrossing to sing. The faux-bourdon method may even be applied to the psalms, thanks to the recently published *Faburden Chantbook*.

Moreover, to use music other than plain-song is advisable for vocal reasons. The very feature that makes plain-song so excellent for congregational purposes—its moderate compass—unfits it for sole use where trebles are concerned. The average boy is a soprano, and if we give him no opportunity of using the best part of his voice we treat him unfairly

and deny ourselves one of the most delightful of vocal effects.

On the whole the prospects of plain-song revival were never so bright as they are to-day, in spite of old prejudices and misconceptions. Among the latter, by the way, one of the most fatal is to be found in the oft-heard remark "Gregorians sound very fine when sung by a large number of voices, especially men's." It would be almost as reasonable to say that they sound fine when sung by people with one leg longer than the other, or by a choir with red hair. The remark applies no more to plain-song than to any other kind of simple music designed for popular use. People who insist on mere weight overlook the fact that one of the chief charms of plain-song is its elasticity. The old idea that demonstrations of plain-song could be given only by vast unwieldy choirs led to the rigid and crude performances that naturally brought the music into disrepute. So far from plain-song requiring great choral force for its proper rendering, it is the one kind of Church music that is effective "where two or three are gathered together." Modern hymn tunes and chants, deprived of their harmonic interest, too often have very little left. For Guild offices and on occasions when no choir or organ is available plain-song—being pure melody, simple, and of limited compass—is the music *par excellence*. It may be sung effectively by any number from two upwards.

The propaganda most needed is demonstrations (especially by small choirs) and congregational practices. Given these, this old music may again become, as it is already in many parishes, the people's

song. We have no more outgrown it than we have outgrown our fine old churches and cathedrals. And just as we think of the walls of these venerable sanctuaries as being steeped with the prayer and praise of generations of worshippers, and revere them accordingly, so the old melodies that served as a medium for this prayer and praise must have a special claim on us that no other music, however beautiful, can possess.

CHAPTER XVIII

TO A DEPUTY-ORGANIST: AN OPEN LETTER

i

You ask for some advice that will help you to fill the place of the regular organist, suddenly taken seriously ill. There are always amateurs in your predicament—some self-taught, some who have had a few lessons a long time ago—called on suddenly to do, after long lack of practice, what they never did when in fair playing form—take sole charge of the parish church music for an indefinite period.

This is a big ordeal, and you can come through with credit only by the exercise of tact and industry and by patience and encouragement on the part of your pastors and masters—the congregation being the latter, in the long run.

So much depends on local conditions, and these vary so much, that my advice must needs be on general lines. Also, I must warn you at the outset that your chief troubles may not be musical at all. They are likely to be concerned less with the organ than with organisation; less with touch than with tact. Artistic sense will be useful, common-sense vital.

I might well begin by saying a few words about your work as choirmaster. Musically your duties will be fairly light, because the absence of the regular organist is likely to lead to some simplifying

of the service. Your difficulties will be chiefly those of discipline and management generally. Here you must not forget that your task is merely to keep things going until the real director returns. This being so, any heroic schemes or innovations are out of place, even if some of them may seem to be desirable. They will look unpleasantly like a reflection on the methods of the absent organist, and so will be resented by his friends. That way disaster lies, and it may easily happen that your attempts at carrying on may end in the choir carrying itself off.

You will best make your bow to the choir as one called in to accept a difficult task in which you hope that they all, from the octogenarian tenor with a few notes left (unfortunately) down to the youngest probationer, will give loyal and generous help. Keep this attitude, without letting it be forgotten that you are head as well as colleague, and you will probably meet with an excellent response.

On the other hand, if you begin by making it plain that whereas the regular choirmaster chastised with whips, you intend to use scorpions you may expect an exciting time, with the scorpions coming home to roost.

So far as the mere playing of the notes is concerned, the music of a simple service demands but little technique. You will soon find, however, that a good deal of resource is called for. The term "accompanist," when applied to a church organist, is rather a misnomer. An organist can really "accompany" only when there is (1) a skilled choir and an

uncongregational type of service, or (2) where the duties of organist and choirmaster are divided, and the latter official is in the choir to direct the singing. Neither of these conditions is likely to be in evidence where you and most of your fellow-deputies are engaged, so you must be prepared to direct rather than accompany. This pronouncement is contrary to the textbooks, and dead against the well-meaning and refined theorists to whom all the merits of an organist are summed up in that blessed word "unobtrusive."

When your choir comes to grief in any one of the numerous possible ways; when the boys become suddenly possessed by some malign influence and proceed to transpose their part a quarter-tone up or down, or get the bit between their teeth and exceed the speed limit; when everybody but yourself seems to be more or less in a state of coma —under any of these or similar circumstances you will find one trial of the "unobtrusive" method sufficient.

You will then, I hope, take charge, even at the risk of being accused of noisiness or vulgarity. However, if you use your bright stops wisely, cultivate mezzo-staccato and staccato touch, and see that your rhythm is definite without stiffness and elastic without eccentricity, you will find it possible to direct the service from the keyboard without an undue amount of loud playing. But you will not do it without asserting yourself. With an indifferent choir, and a crowd of people singing, *somebody* must direct. Who, if not the organist, even though he be a mere deputy?

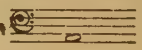
To be able to rise to the occasion under such trying conditions, you must have a bit of technique to spare. As your playing will be chiefly of chants and hymn tunes, this does not seem to be an extravagant demand. But as a matter of fact, to play such small things easily and well is more difficult than most people imagine. An organist who can play a hymn tune with an unbroken *legato* in all the four parts, pedalling the bass as written, has left the *pons asinorum* of the art far behind him. If he can manage such variations as (1) manual staccato and pedal legato, (2) *vice versa*, (3) treble part staccato, remainder legato, or (4) treble part played as a solo, he is well on the way towards being a good player. Indeed, it is not too much to say that hymn tunes (including, of course, Bach's harmonisations of chorals) contain everything necessary for the building up of a thoroughly good technique on all sides but the brilliant—which for plain church organists is the side that doesn't matter. Pedalling, part-playing, soloing, phrasing, registration—all are there for the intelligent student. And you may spend good hard money on studies for double pedal, and after all find nothing better than you can get gratis from your hymn book. When you can play a hymn tune in this way:

Treble: R.H. solo.
Alto: L.H.
Tenor: Right foot.
Bass: Left foot.

ordinary double-pedalling will have no terrors for you. This arrangement can be made effective, too, with the manual stops well contrasted, and the

tenor and bass played with an 8 ft. stop of telling and characteristic quality.

I mentioned above the importance of pedalling the bass of hymn tunes "as written." Most beginners play the bass an octave lower as far as the compass of the pedal-board allows, dodging up into the proper position when it doesn't. They do this for either or both of two reasons: (*a*) their pedal technique is of the left-foot variety, partly because they never quite mastered the subject in its early stages, and partly because their right foot is as faithful to the swell-pedal as the magnet to the pole; and (*b*) they fondly believe that the lower the depths they can reach with that hopping and slithering left foot the more support they are giving the singers.

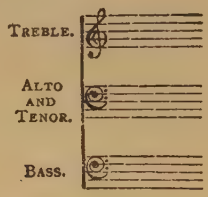
As to (*a*) there is nothing to be said beyond recommending you to leave the swell-pedal alone for a time, and make your right foot as useful as your left, not being satisfied until each member is a frequent visitor to the other end of the pedal-board. When your left can comfortably play round and your right round  you may resume your study of the swell-pedal.

The second reason is founded on a popular fallacy. By far the most telling part of the pedal-board for all-round purposes is the middle and upper half. If you want to see why, try the whole compass with a 16 ft. stop alone. You will find the lowest notes very booming and indistinct. Of course the coupling of the manual 8 ft. and 4 ft. stops goes some way towards making things right, though even then

there can be no question as to the superiority of the middle and higher notes. But do not take my word for it. Consult any good orchestral score, and see how composers treat 'cello and double-bass, which are *their* 8 ft. and 16 ft. registers. You will find the two instruments almost always playing the same written notes (which, of course, gives an effect of octaves), and you will notice that their part is generally high rather than low. So pedal the bass of hymns and chants at their normal vocal pitch, except on occasions when you feel that the extra gravity produced by the octave lower is desirable. Even then, take care that you do not spoil the melodic outline of the bass—a very frequent result of an attempt to transpose a bass already rather low.

If you are not able to pedal a hymn tune well, have no scruples about playing it on the manuals alone. Deputies often think that the congregation will make unkind remarks if the pedals are not used. Believe me, very few hearers will notice the deficiency. If you play neatly and fluently on the manuals, you will pass muster, whereas if you add the pedals fitfully and clumsily, the wrong notes and gaps can hardly escape notice. Moreover, as most organists use the pedals far too much, the entire absence of booming 16 ft. tone in a few churches will do something to redress the balance. Make sure that what pedalling you do shall be neat and good. Copy out at least one hymn tune weekly, adding footing marks, and making a little study of it. You might well go a litte further, and make a manuscript arrangement, with the treble as a solo, playing the

alto and tenor with the left hand, and writing out the parts thus :



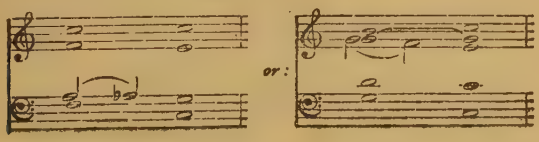
If the choir is well balanced and able to sing unaccompanied, let them do so from time to time. Occasionally you may let the organ part consist merely of a duplication of one of the voice parts—the bass for choice. Pedal it quietly and you will be getting some useful practice, besides giving the voices a chance.

In playing over hymn tunes, remember the purposes behind the custom, and you will have no doubt as to how to do it. The objects are simply to give out the tune and set the pace. Obviously, there is no need here for expressive or solo effects—though you will of course announce a joyful hymn a little more loudly than a penitential. But you should not do as too many fully fledged organists do—rattle through a couple of lines, and then proceed to take the hymn at about half the speed.

Before the hymn is given out, see that your various manuals are arranged so that you can get several changes of power and quality without having to spare a hand or foot. There are plenty of effects thus easily available, more than is generally supposed. Don't forget that many stops are most effective when used singly : their combination gives power,

but often at the expense of character. How many organists realise the beauty of an open diapason *solus*? Use your soft 16 ft. and 8 ft. an octave higher, and you get a new 8 ft. and 4 ft. of delightful quality. Similarly, try your 8 ft., 4 ft., and 2 ft. stops an octave lower. Make frequent use of uncoupled manuals. Even a small swell organ is doubly effective after a spell of uncoupled great or choir flue-work. In a quiet hymn or psalm the entry of the pedal may occasionally be reserved until the end, with impressive results. If you have some good 8 ft. pedal stops, use them alone sometimes. In fact, there are more possibilities even in a small organ than I have time to mention. Many of them are none the worse for being of a slight and subtle kind. They are negative rather than positive: they do not give variety so much as ensure the avoidance of monotony. Listening to a good player you may be conscious of few changes, and yet somehow the music is full of life and interest. That is because he is skilfully mixing his colours, instead of laying them on with a trowel.

Responses and Amens are best left unaccompanied, but if you *do* play them use quiet 8 ft. stops as a rule, adding a 4 ft. if necessary. Pedals should rarely be used, and 16 ft. manual stops never. And in regard to Amens, play the notes written—plain common chords. Don't let your fingers wander idly in such directions as:



As to voluntaries, be content to play simple pieces, and do not scorn good music written for manuals only. There is plenty to be had, especially from French sources, our neighbours across the Channel esteeming the harmonium highly, and their first-rank composers not disdaining to write for it.

I would only add in this connection that as organ voluntaries are among the things not generally necessary to salvation (congregations being able to assemble and disperse without their aid), they justify themselves only by being good music (however simple), well played.

Akin to voluntaries are the little bits of "filling-in" sometimes necessary during a service. As you know beforehand at which points such need is likely to arise, you should provide yourself with a book of short interludes (there are plenty available) and have one in the right key and style ready. Better still, if you have any gift for composition, write suitable passages, providing an alternative ending or optional repeat, so as to be ready to lengthen them at will. But if you are ever taken by surprise and have no talent for improvising, let a decent silence ensue, or content yourself with a very soft playing of a portion of the music just sung. The one thing you should not do is to shatter this golden silence with an improvised effort (effort is the exact word) which sounds like a very nervous examinee coming to grief over sight-reading or transposition, with a badly written harmony exercise for test.

It is not unusual for the officiant to involuntarily leave the sacred note G during a long prayer;

some even refuse the note given on the organ; and others make use of a *tonus peregrinus*, arriving at a settled pitch during the last clause. In these cases, don't find out the pitch for the Amen by tentative tappings on the keyboard unless you have a *very* soft stop. Use a tuning-fork. Here are a few more useful articles without which no console is well provided: a box of matches; a pencil; a penknife; a small writing-pad or note-book; a pair of nail-scissors. Your service paper should be fastened in such a position that it is always in view. If you can get some kind clerk in your choir to type the lists so much the better. See that all your books are on the desk before the service, with the places found as far as possible. (A senior choir boy will generally be proud to look after this.) All these things are trifles, you say. True, but there is not one of them that will not sooner or later help you to avoid a hitch of some sort.

In keeping your choir register, mark only the absences. This is less trouble at the time, and enables you to see each member's record more easily. Finally, don't be discouraged because your efforts have to be confined almost entirely to the plain and elementary. Despite, or because of, all the complexity and harmonic variety of modern music, our ears are always open to the good, strong simple works, well and simply played. That's where *you* come in.

ii

After my letter had gone beyond recall, I realised that it had left several knotty points

untouched, so your batch of questions was not unexpected.

I will do my best to answer, first reminding you that I shall be bound to keep to general principles.

Q. Is it advisable to keep the G sounding while the choir intones, say during the General Confession? Otherwise it is impossible to play Amens.

A. The General Confession should be said, as the Prayer Book directs, "with a humble voice." In many churches it is said on a low note: there is a good deal of sense in the growing practice of using no definite note until after the versicle "O Lord, open Thou our lips." In either case the Amen should not be sung.

Q. Can one accompany the Confession as one does the Lord's Prayer or Creed?

A. One can, but one had much better not. Such parts of the service should be kept as plain as possible. Perhaps there are still a few places where the choir cries *mea culpa* in exquisitely sung four-part harmony, but the custom is dying. When you come to think it over, the melodious warbling of the General Confession is about as logical a proceeding as saying the Hallelujah Chorus—very much less so, in fact.

The accompaniment of the monotoned Lord's Prayer and Creed is now so firmly established that its disuse would probably be resented. But I think it is well for us to remember that it has no justification if the choir can maintain the pitch and sing the Amen without such aid. And this feat ought to be possible for all but a very few choirs. After all, a choir that cannot speak on a given note for thirty

seconds has not got very far on the road of progress, has it? I have heard choirmasters say that there is no time to practise monotoning. But useful practice that will kill two birds with one stone is got by the reading on a note of a few verses of a hymn. This should be done in the case of unfamiliar words set to a well-known tune. The singing of such a hymn is almost certain to be perfunctory, so it will rest the voices and draw attention to the importance of the words if you let the boys monotone it softly. Give a different note to each verse, and lightly accompany it, finishing up with the singing of the last verse, or any portion that contains words likely to give special trouble when sung.

By such means boys can be got to monotone easily: the trouble is with the men. If you can induce them to be so humble as to use the same exercises, well and good. If not, you must spare a few minutes from time to time and rehearse the Creed, etc. You will find that the men most likely to get off the note are those who never really got on to it at the beginning of a sentence. "Scooping" is the fatal habit as a rule. But really, in almost all cases, monotoning or singing out of tune is merely a habit. We shall help people to overcome it best by getting them to regard it as being against the rule, like bad behaviour. In fact, it is a kind of musical bad manners.

Q. What proportion of full practice is to be given to (*a*) hymns, (*b*) psalms, and (*c*) to sheet music?

A. Impossible to answer. Only the man on the spot can decide. Most choirs could do with lots of

(*a*) and (*b*), and will therefore continue, as heretofore, to devote their best energies to (*c*).

Q. May the deputy go so far as to criticise at all? Or must he throughout the practices be unobtrusive for fear of giving offence to the friends of the absent organist?

A. The deputy is to do his best to keep up the standard of the choir; he cannot do this if he is afraid to take the necessary steps for fear of treading on somebody's corns. But corns are best left untrodden on, so he should step delicately, though step he must. It ought not to be difficult to frame criticisms so that no offence is given.

Q. Will not the deputy find his tact strained sometimes to the very utmost when it becomes patent to all that he is a better choir-trainer than the absentee?

A. If the deputy is able not merely to maintain the choir's standard, but improve it, so much the better. The aim of all concerned is to make their music worthy of the church. If the regular organist returns and finds the choir better than he left it, he may feel a little sore at first. If he is as keen about his job as he ought to be, this soreness will give place to more wholesome feelings, among them being a determination that the choir shall at least not slip back. If he is a "slacker" he will, of course, be jealous, and there will be trouble all round. But the deputy must not consider such possibilities. He must do his level best, and let the future take care of itself.

Q. I should like some further hints on accompanying the congregation. Our people are apt to

get out of hand, especially in their favourite hymns.

A. Maybe you are indecisive in playing over and starting. Are you always clear in your own mind as to the pace and style of the hymn about to be sung? Even some experienced organists are careless in this respect.

Perhaps you adopt a bullying style of accompaniment, a kind of "Come-along-don't-drag" method, with a cast-iron *tempo*.

You will probably keep your people together better if you insist less on strict time. Strict time is an admirable quality in a metronome or a clock: in music a little of it goes a long way. How many good soloists sing in strict time? How many could, even if it were desirable? Breath has to be taken, verbal accent considered, and climaxes and points of repose made. To some extent these factors have to be considered even in such simple forms as hymns. Set your metronome at a fairly brisk pace, and sing "Melcombe" without the slightest "give" at the end of the lines. What a square, stilted result you get! That is strict time. The little pull-up and allowance of a slight break for breathing purposes at the end of each line not only improves the rhythm, but is necessary in congregational singing. A crowd of people singing will relax the time instinctively, and their instinct is right. The result is good rhythm—the easy, loose-limbed walk of a human, not the precise and mincing steps of an automaton. We need far more rhythmical variety in our Church music.

Of course, there are occasions when a congregation

will drag, and you must be prepared to speed them up. You will find a shortening of the final chord in each line a useful means of checking a tendency to drag. In fact, this lifting of the hands should be invariable. It is as definite to the ear as a conductor's beat is to the eye. The common practice of making a hymn tune an unbroken succession of chords is responsible for a good deal of bad singing. Note that this is especially the case when the end of one line and the beginning of the next have the same harmony. You may suggest breathing places in long lines, and breaks to bring out some points in the words by this same slight shortening of a chord. After all, it comes to this: the nearer you can get to singing with your fingers the better accompanist you will be. You will soon find that what you have often impatiently protested against (with full organ) as being the bad time of an uneducated mob, was merely the practical expression of the common-sense of some hundreds of people as intelligent as yourself. And when you realise that more can be done in our profession with seventy-five per cent of common-sense and twenty-five per cent. of art than by the reverse, you will be on the way to making a brilliant success of your deputyship.

CHAPTER XIX

A DUOLOGUE CONCERNING HIS INSTRUMENT

Musicus. Organicus

i

M. Has it ever struck you as being odd that the instruments most sung by the poets are among the least satisfactory? Pegasus has rarely been hauled from his stable on behalf of the violin and pianoforte—two instruments as near perfection as can be. But he has had many a gallop while his rider—generally ignorant of both music and instruments—has sung himself hoarse in praise of the harp and organ. There is something to be said for the harp on the score of picturesqueness. It certainly beats all other instruments in an appeal to the eye. When the ear is concerned, however, a very few minutes of its tinkling is enough to satisfy. The organ has nothing in its appearance to commend it to the lover of the beautiful. You may deck it with carved wood, add gilded angels blowing something between a Bach trumpet and a post-horn, arrange dummy pipes in nice gradation, with other delights. But these things are not the instrument. They are merely trimmings. Behind them all is a monstrous collection of pipes and machinery. If there is a detached console, it looks for all the world like a harmonium afflicted with dropsy.

O. May I——

M. You may—later. What a ghastly compromise your organ is! A menagerie!—a collection of effects and devices many of which will not bear inquiring into—a gigantic box of mystery—the super-sausage of musical instruments! For example, you have a stop called *vox humana.* Why, my dear fellow, if you or I or anybody else got up in public and emitted sounds like it, the audience would demand its money back. Then you have also a *voix celeste.* We can say nothing as to the correctness of the name, because nobody has heard a celestial voice—a fact which makes the choice of name even more absurd. You might as reasonably call a stop *voix de fée.* Fairies, however, being hopelessly pagan, can hardly look to be so honoured. Moreover, you generally get this "celestial" effect by using two stops purposely out of tune with one another. Why not extend the idea to the choir-stalls? You want to give your congregation a taste of celestial music. Very well. All you have to do is to turn on a couple of solo boys, one of them singing slightly sharp. But you don't. The only effects of the kind in your choir are unrehearsed, and lead to trouble when you next meet the culprits. Then you have your mixtures—an abomination, if ever there was one. You take delicate harmonics, and exaggerate them out of all proportion by making little tin whistles to sound them. Also you make one stop do double duty under different names, using it on one manual under one name, and borrowing it for another manual and calling it something else. Your motley army of

pipes is a fearful compromise in the matter of tuning. I believe that if some of you organists heard a passage played in the pure scale you would find it objectionable, forgetting that the fault is in your vitiated ears. Further, in a big modern organ, how rare it is to hear passages for full organ sound like anything but a hopeless muddle! Old Haydn, had he lived to-day, need not have been at the pains to compose his extremely mild "Representation of Chaos." He would have saved time, and been more convincing, had he written some rapid passage-work and directed it to be played full organ with all couplers.

O. But——

M. Exactly! You are going to point out that the fault occasionally lies with the player. This is true, I admit. It is also sometimes the fault of the composer, who writes "full organ" over many a passage that would be more effective with half the stops. For example, you are playing a rapid pedal solo. "Full pedal organ," says the composer. So you shoot out all your pedal stops, and start on your mad career. Now, your full pedal includes a 32 ft., a heavy booming 16 ft. open, and a hoarse 16 ft. reed. Your other pedal stops, and those on the manuals played through your couplers, back you up loyally enough. But how many of the semiquavers do the bigger pipes of your heaviest pedal stops give? Listen carefully, and you will hear intermittent hoarse noises—spasmodic coughs from the underworld, as of some monster in pain. Why don't you players reserve these slow-speaking heavy stops for suitable passages? I admit their effectiveness when holding on some long, relentless

pedal-point, or for delivering a grandly stalking *cantus firmus*. What composer for the orchestra ever gave his tuba and bass-trombone rapid passages in unison with the bass strings? Even the 16 ft. tone of the strings is rarely called upon for a sprint, save for special effects. Do you suppose that Beethoven would have used the double-basses for the giving out of the fughetta subject in the *scherzo* of the C minor symphony had he wished the passage to be clear and the effect purely musical? Not a bit of it! Why do audiences smile at the elephantine capers of the basses at this point? Either Beethoven meant to make them smile with one of his rough jokes, or he made a miscalculation. I think we know our Beethoven well enough to decide which is the case. Yet you organists play quick pedal passages (not quite so rapid as the Beethoven passage, I admit, but too much so for clear effect) with your most lumbering stops drawn, and seriously think the effect is satisfactory. Similarly, you play a *presto* passage on your full great, with full swell, coupled, which means that doubles and reeds are included. This is pretty much as if an orchestral composer should direct all the strings, wood-wind, and brass to play a brilliant cadenza in unison.

O. It seems to me——

M. Let me edge in a word or two. Is there anything in musical terminology more absurd than your haphazard collection of stop-names? You have odds and ends of half-a-dozen languages—and many of the titles are absolute misnomers. For instance, the stop that you call Horn, and with which some of you play passages in transcriptions

that are in the original played by the horn of the orchestra, is not at all like the real thing. Some of your flue stops can be used as very fair imitations of the orchestral horn, so of course you call them various kinds of diapasons. Your oboe is merely a milder form of your so-called horn, and is not a bit like the orchestral one. The stop that goes nearest to giving us the real "tang" of an oboe is usually what you call a gamba—which, of course, is a name borrowed from the old string family. The piccolo of the orchestra sounds an octave higher than its big brother, the flute. Your corresponding stop you call a flute 4 ft., and your piccolo sounds *two* octaves higher than the real flute. Perhaps as a result of our present (possibly fleeting) preference for English things, including language, we may find the organ specification of the future couched in our own tongue. I amused myself the other day by drawing up a list of stops in your usual linguistic muddle (for instance, you frequently find flöte, flauto, and flute in the same specification), afterwards giving a literal English version. Here it is:

Geigen	Rohrflöte
Clarabella	Voix celestes
Hohl-flöte	Hautboy
Dulciana	Lieblich Bourdon
Sesquialtera	Viola da Gamba
Flauto traverso	Gemshorn
Lieblich Gedacht	Waldflöte
Vox humana	Quint
Unda maris	Contra Gamba
Bourdon	Tuba mirabilis

Gedackt	Vox Angelica
Salicet	Cor de nuit
Suabe Flöte	Piccolo
Flautina	Tibia plena
Contra fagotto	

How many of our builders would dare use these titles in English? Here they are, in their proper order:

Fiddle	Knee violin
Clear-beautiful	Chamois horn
Hollow flute	Wood flute
Sweet	Fifth
Whole and half another (!)	Double knee
	Wonderful trumpet
Cross flute	Closed
Lovely closed	Little willow
Human voice	Swabian flute
Wave of the sea	Little flute
Burden	Double faggot
Reed flute	Angelic voice
Celestial voice	Night horn
Highwood	Little
Lovely burden	Full bone

There's a medley for you! And of all of them the funniest is perhaps your "Unda maris." Where was your sense of humour when you called your ridiculous trembling effect "Wave of the sea"? "Wave in a teacup" would be nearer the mark!

However, leaving this amusing side of your alleged musical instrument, what of it as regards

dynamics? To begin with, you have no means of obtaining accent. I laugh when I see composers of organ music peppering their pages with *sforzando* marks. And, mind you, they don't merely mean a touch on the swell-pedal (of which monstrosity I shall have something to say later). This is proved by the fact that such marks often occur when both feet are engaged in pedalling. Moreover, we often meet with an accent mark over one note, played on the same manual as others not so marked. How can it be done?

O. We——

M. Yes, I know how you organists fondly imagine you get over the difficulty. You think that by lengthening your accented notes, and taking a bit off the less important ones, you give us a satisfactory substitute. The method is fairly successful in passages where the rate of movement is slow, but how when it is rapid? Compare your performance of such a phrase as:

with that of a violinist or pianist. Not only can you give no real accent; you cannot obtain a *crescendo.* You may thrust out a hoof and put in action some more or less clumsy mechanism by means of which you open some shutters, and let out more sound—which is not the same thing at all. A good *crescendo* by a voice or any other wind instrument—any wind instrument, that is, but yours—gives the hearer not only more sound, but an impression of growing

intensity as well. The motive power—air—is under the control of the performer, and the pressure can be varied. But you have no control over your wind supply, and your alleged *crescendo* by means of opening the swell is a poor thing because it is so obviously a cheap "fake." When you build your organ you intern what is often nowadays the finest part of your instrument in a huge wooden box. You make it as sound-proof as you can, and when the composer demands a *crescendo* you dole out the noise. Even then, with all your care, your swell doesn't play the game, for the first inch or so of opening the shutters produces as much effect as all the other inches together, so you have shot your bolt too early to get any prolonged cumulative effect. Your *diminuendo* is, of course, as great a failure. Just as you have to prepare for your *crescendo* by entombing half your organ, so in playing you have to get ready for your *diminuendo* by opening your swell.

O. But——

M. That's a delusion. You were about to argue that you can get your increase and decrease of tone by means of stops. I admit that by drawing or pushing in stops you make more or less noise, but the sound comes on in chunks, and goes off in the same way. Even the German "Rollschweller" is only a modified success, though it is sufficiently good to deserve more general adoption in this country. Of course when you play on your great or choir alone your tone is absolutely fixed and level—and the joke is that some of you pretend to like it! Would you like a voice or a pianoforte

or any other instrument to possess the same virtue? Besides, if it is a virtue in your great and choir, why make your swell vicious by enclosing it? Then your tremulant! You think you can reproduce the almost imperceptible wave which a good voice discovers in moments of emotion, and you set about this impossible task by creating a commotion in the swell-box with a fan. My dear fellow, when I sing I can get a better tremulant than that by playing five-finger exercises on my Adam's apple.

What an instrument! Apply some of its methods to other branches of executive music—the choral, for example. Behold in your mind's eye the Royal Choral Society. Before they commence to sing the members draw on a divers' helmet. Why? They must prepare for *crescendos* by enclosing the sound. They must be able to see the conductor, so obviously a diver's helmet is the only wear. A *crescendo* is demanded, the conductor signifying the same in the usual manner. Two thousand little trap-doors open at the top of as many helmets, and a thrilling effect is the result. Observe, too, that when the sound goes out the air comes in, and the choir goes on its way refreshed and rejoicing. (Over what happened on one occasion when a thoughtless composer demanded six consecutive pages of *pianissimo* singing let us draw a veil. In vain did the conductor "Sh-sh-sh!"—some unfortunate member was constantly coming to the surface for air.)

O. Look here, if you call this sort of thing argument——

M. Keep your eye on the Royal Choral. A *crescendo* lasting over several pages is desired. This is more than the helmet-shutters can manage. So the first step is to reduce the choir. This is done by silencing all the singers save the Montmorencys, De Veres, Marchbanks, and Chumleys. The remaining clans are added in accordance with the accession of strength required. For a slight addition the ffoulkes, Mortimers, or Standishes are sufficient. For a sudden burst the Jones's, Browns, or Robinsons are called on, while for the final crash (corresponding to your coupling of solo to great) the Smiths step into the breach, with what effect you may imagine. To see the conductor haling these families in and setting them to work is one of the joys of London life. But see! a soloist rises, and begins to sing. There is a demand for emotional display in the second page of his song. He raises a superlatively manicured hand, and with a couple of fingers beats a light tattoo on his throat. The effect is magical. As the liquid, trembling notes steal over the vast hall, women silently weep, and strong men sniff and draw their sleeve across their brow. Even the timpanist, a hard man not easily moved (especially when, as now, he has seventy-two bars rest to count) blows his nose with stifled ferocity, the tuba-player thereby incurring in next morning's *Daily Semaphore* a rebuke for a wrong entry.

Returning to the choir for a moment, you will of course understand that prolonged *diminuendos* are managed by inverting the *crescendo* arrangements. The Smiths are first to be dismissed—and finally the Chumleys and Marchbanks are left in sole possession.

Ridiculous? Of course it is. But these are your own methods at the organ.

Finally—for I observe signs of impatience—can you wonder that decent composers refuse to touch your uncouth monster with a barge-pole? Talking recently to one of the cleverest of our English composers, I asked him why he never wrote for the organ, although he played it. He replied: "When I write for pianoforte I know what I am writing for, since one pianoforte is pretty much like another. I am also on safe ground in dealing with strings, and when writing for orchestra I say what instruments are required, knowing that they will be forthcoming. But a composer for the organ may be writing for anything, since there is no standard. There is the Albert Hall organ on the one hand, and the box of whistles at a village church on the other. You may as well call a flea and an elephant by the same name, and ask a saddler to fit 'em both from the same pattern.

O. Now, if you're quite finished, perhaps I may be permitted to say something on behalf of the defence. I fancy it will not be difficult to show that many of your objections have the slenderest of foundations. And—before I get to work—apropos the Anglicising of stop-names, since you object to our use of fragments of foreign tongues, I hope you will practise what you preach.

M. How?

O. When next your pianoforte needs the tuner's attention, you will, of course, ask him to come and tune your soft-loud.

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O. Well, 'tis a formidable indictment—on paper at all events. I fancy, however, that when counsel for the defence comes to deal with the various points the organ will be found less black than it is painted. I put on one side its ugly appearance. "Handsome is that handsome does" applies no less to instruments than to persons. Some of us decorate the street we tread; others are mere blots on the landscape, and often the biggest blots have been the ablest of men. You yourself—but I must get on. You condemn the organ as "a monstrous collection of devices and effects, many of which will not bear inquiring into." Is there any need to inquire into them? The question is: Do they justify themselves by their effect? I might apply your argumentative methods to several departments of the orchestra. On paper, what can be more inartistic than smiting a huge hollow cylinder with skin stretched across its two ends; or beating a smaller tub with strings stretched across one end to increase the din by their rattling against the skin; or clashing together discs of brass, the hideous vibrations being silenced only by the player clasping the deadly weapons close to his breast; or thumbing a small arrangement of wood and skin with little brass discs rattling; or tapping a piece of bent iron with a bloated skewer; or lustily beating a huge tea-tray of substantial build?

None of these alleged musical instruments are capable of sounding a given note, yet they are allowed to intrude themselves into the harmony

played by the strings and wind. In theory, it seems absurd. Yet we know that the bass drum, the side drum, the cymbals, the tambourine, the triangle, and the gong, are very valuable members of the orchestra, and, used with discretion, give us many delightful moments. They are the condiments of the orchestral feast. So with the *vox humana*, *voix celeste*, and mixtures of the organ. The names of the first two are, of course, absurd, but I deny that their effect is inartistic. Your objection to the *voix celeste*, as being produced by a couple of stops not in tune with one another, and your suggestion that we should try the effect with two boys' voices, are based on a misapprehension. Two boys singing out of tune sound merely like what they are—two boys singing out of tune. On the other hand, a couple of good gambas, one tuned slightly sharp, do not sound like two stops out of tune; the result is a colour richer than that of either stop alone, or of both exactly in tune, *plus* an undulating effect of real beauty. I am sure that when some ingenious person produces an orchestral instrument that will sound like the much-abused *voix celeste*, composers will adopt it with enthusiasm. The tone is warmer than the acid oboe, and more expressive than the desolate *corno Inglese*.

Then as to our mixtures. If, as a result of their use, we heard harmonics squeaking above everything else, the effect would be excruciating. But we don't. The presence of mixtures in a well-balanced scheme may be likened to the nasal resonance of a good singer, or to the flavour of garlic in soup. When the singer reminds you that he has a nose, or the garlic

ceases to be an exciting suspicion and becomes a terrible certainty, both singer and cook have overdone things. As to the confused effect of rapid passages played on the full organ, I agree with you to some extent. But so much depends upon the acoustic properties of the building that it is not fair to generalise. I have heard brilliant passage-work clearly in some churches, while in others the effect produced by the same player, music, and registration was mere chaos. Your contention that because orchestral composers do not employ the brass in rapid passages therefore organists should not use the louder reeds for quick work, is not sound. Brass players are not usually asked to play very rapid notes for the best of reasons—such passages would be enormously difficult, and the effect would not be worth the trouble. The loud 8 ft. reeds of an organ, however, if good, can speak much more rapidly than the higher brass of the orchestra, and may therefore be effectively employed in passages where the latter would merely be spluttering. At the same time, the reeds are so rich in upper partials that I agree with you that their use in complex music, where the movement is very quick, sometimes tends to confusion. As to our absurd stop-names, I am with you entirely. But much the same thing exists in every department of musical terminology.

For example, it would be absurd to call our shortest note "long." But we have been calling our longest note "breve" all our life, and never turned a hair. Your *cor Anglais*, or *corno Inglese*, is not a horn, and is not of English origin. Hence its name, I suppose. I could improvise a list of absurdities fully as long as

your catalogue of organ stops, but I refrain. As to the deficiency of our instrument in the matter of accent, we must plead guilty. I may point out, however, that there are plenty of organists who by their phrasing and variety of touch are able to make the defect practically unnoticeable by any but the keenest ears. In acquiring this ability, they learn subtleties in phrasing that many performers on other instruments—especially the voice—never approach. The overcoming of the drawback leads to a special excellence. I cannot agree with you about the ineffectiveness of the swell-box. If you asked a hundred average musicians to describe the effect of opening the box, ninety-nine would say that it was an increase of power. I make you a present of the hundredth, a highly superior person who would probably insist that the effect was merely that of sound approaching nearer. So far from admitting the futility of the device, I go further and say that the effect of a fine swell with the box closed is so good that I am sure that if orchestral conductors could suddenly enclose their orchestra for the obtaining of remote effects they would jump at the chance. As to a *crescendo* by means of stops being a series of "chunks of sound," much depends upon the particular organ and player. On an up-to-date instrument with a skilful man at the console an increase can be graded in a way that would stagger the old school of players, who prepared their registration at the beginning of a work, and left it at that, contenting themselves with occasional changes of manual. But after all, doesn't your orchestra come on "in chunks"? Even in a

very gradual *crescendo* one can hear the different families enter. Of course the *crescendo* of a single instrument such as the violin or trombone can never be rivalled by the most effective swell-box in the world.

Then you poured ridicule on our tremulant. For the life of me, I can see nothing more inartistic in agitating the wind in the swell-box than in shaking a finger on a string as violinists and 'cellists do. The *vibrato* of a good singer—I don't mean the miserable wobble of a bad one—is the result of pretty much the same operation, only it is not visible. Surely it's all one whether the *vibrato* is caused by a fan, a trembling finger on a string, or by a singer's rapid diminishing and reinforcing a note. If the effect is good—as it is in all three cases, used judiciously—we need not concern ourselves with the cause.

M. I——

O. Bide a wee! You've had your innings, and retired with a decent score to your credit. *I'm* at the wicket now, trying to make a few. Passing by your absurd comparison of the organ with a choral society, let me say a few words about the modern composer's alleged neglect of the organ. First, as to the clever young man who won't write for it because organs vary so much. There is really very little in this objection. Organs vary no more than do performers. If your young man were logical he would go on to say: "If I compose a work for the London Symphony or Queen's Hall orchestras I know what I am writing for, since they are all first-rate players and always under the control

of first-rate conductors. Similarly if I write pianoforte or violin music for any of our leading players, I shall be sure of my music making the effect I intend. But inasmuch as many inferior orchestras, conductors, and players abound, I prefer not to run the risk of my work being murdered, so I don't compose. There is all the difference in the world between the pianoforte-playing of an eminent virtuoso and that of the half-baked amateur who is sublimely unconscious of his ignorance of the very elements of touch. You might as well call a mastodon and a microbe by the same name, and try to harness them to the same cart. So now you know why I have such a long list of unwritten works to my credit."

M. That is——

O. Off the pitch, please! Moreover, this modern anxiety about the exactness of the medium is a sign of weakness. Instrumental music that loses all its effectiveness when transcribed is very often deficient in idea. Practically all the best orchestral music can be played as pianoforte duet with good results. The more vital the music, and the stronger in idea and development, the better it comes through the ordeal. But orchestral music depending for its effect upon skilful manipulation of colour, the simultaneous employment of various planes of harmony, and other devices possible only with a big orchestra, is surely on a somewhat lower level. To compose work of the former kind an inspired musician is necessary, whereas the latter might be written by anyone with a thorough understanding of the possibilities of the various instruments, *plus* a feeling for colour and skill in mixing

it: just as a picture can be painted only by a completely equipped artist, while pleasing chiaroscuro and kaleidoscopic effects may be arranged by one ignorant of the elements of drawing. But *is* the organ so neglected by modern composers? I wonder if you are aware of the extraordinarily fine organ music produced of late years in France, to mention one country alone. In this connection I recall some remarks by one of the ablest of our critics, who a few years ago waxed enthusiastic over Louis Vierne's "Twenty-four Pièces en style libre" for organ or harmonium. He described the composer's name as "entirely unfamiliar," and went on to say that "unfortunately he has confined his splendid ability to creation for the organ." Why "unfortunately," if among the results are three organ symphonies which, as the critic says, "are quite masterpieces of their sort"? Louis Vierne may be a new composer to people interested chiefly in opera or orchestral works, but his music has long been familiar to many organists both in England and America. These "Twenty-four Pieces," for example, were played by some of us despised organists within a few weeks of their first appearance. The critic appears to think that Vierne is doomed to obscurity because he does not compose for the stage. Hence, I suppose, the "unfortunately." But opera is only one department of music. Organ-players and lovers of organ music are numbered by tens of thousands. Many of them are indifferent to opera, just as many opera devotees are indifferent to organ music. It is a mistake to suppose that a composer of organ music alone is necessarily condemned to neglect.

César Franck is a striking case of a neglected genius being largely saved from oblivion by his organ music. It appears that nothing less than a European war was necessary to bring home to English orchestral conductors the greatness of his symphony. We organists laughed when we saw it announced in extra large type, as if it were a new work, while critics spoke of its worthiness of inclusion in the list of popular symphonies. It was composed in 1886-88, and until 1914 its English performances had averaged perhaps one in three or four years. Meanwhile Franck's name has for long past been honoured by English organists in a practical way—they have played his music. Bless you, *they* didn't need Armageddon to draw their attention to the great Belgian; the beauties of the "Three Chorals," the "Six Pieces," and the "Pièce Héroïque" will be appreciated by them and their hearers for a long time yet. On the other hand, I shall be pleasantly surprised if César's symphony does not go back on the shelf again shortly, the symphonic repertory of our orchestras being once more reduced to the more popular ones of Beethoven and the *Pathétique* of Tschaikovsky.

No, sir. Organ music, if you are a Widor, a Rheinberger, a Guilmant, or even a Salomé or Dubois, means not only reputation, but hard cash as well. Some of our young composers, who at present write orchestral music and get perhaps one performance, some honour and glory, and nothing more solid, may do worse than express themselves via the organ.

You alluded, in passing, to the excellence of the violin and the pianoforte. I have no wish to dis-

parage those delightful instruments. I will content myself with pointing out that, like the organ, they have the defects of their qualities. The violin is ideal for playing a melody, but it cannot manage its own accompaniment, and when it essays to give us three- or four-part harmony the effect is painful, reminding one of what Dr Johnson said of a dog's dancing on its hind legs: "Sir, it is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all." Where, too, is your *crescendo* on the pianoforte? You may make a note louder than the preceding one, but you cannot increase a sustained note; indeed, you cannot sustain a note at all. From the moment the hammer has struck the wire, a *diminuendo* sets in. I grant that this very defect has been turned to good account by modern composers in their use of vanishing harmonies, but it is a defect none the less.

While it is true that misguided players sometimes attempt too much in the way of transcriptions, there are some well-known passages in orchestral and other instrumental music that actually sound better on the organ than in their original form. I have heard the prelude to *Lohengrin* played so often that I can cheerfully look forward to never hearing it again. But I have never yet heard those opening delicate high violin passages without an uncomfortable feeling that they were not so ethereal as the composer intended them to be, or even beyond reproach as regards intonation. A very soft organ stop can give the passages with more certainty and delicacy, and with no trouble to the performer. My first acquaintance with the slow movement of Debussy's quartet

in G minor was made through an organ transcription. It charmed me at once, and I made haste to hear it played by strings. It still charmed me, but I came to the conclusion that the greater part of it was equally effective on the organ, and the exquisite ending very much more so. The same may be said of much pianoforte music, where the idiom is not too distinctively pianistic. There must surely be some points about an instrument with such capabilities. Moreover, your big choral and orchestral effects need the co-operation of great numbers, with proportionate cost. Your organ once built, a skilful pair of hands and feet can work wonders. The fixed tone you spoke of with contempt has really a beauty of its own. No other instrument can produce a long note without a suspicion of *crescendo* or *diminuendo*—not because they don't want to, but merely because the control of breath or bow is too difficult. If you doubt this, ask a good singer to sustain a note to the capacity of the breath without the *slightest* change of force. Yet there are moments in music when a dead level of sound has its point. Only the organ can sustain a note as unyielding and remorseless as Fate.

As for the public appreciation of the organ I will only ask you, when next you are at Queen's Hall, to notice what happens when the organ is introduced. You will see nine-tenths of the audience turn their eyes towards the console with their faces expressing interest and pleasure. Indeed, some of the most popular "Promenade" items owe their vogue chiefly to the organ part. Either your estimate of our instrument as a "monstrosity" is wrong, or

the audience are barbarians. I grant you that some of this appeal may be due to the association of the organ with religious observance. But this very association proves the great and dignified qualities of the instrument. Thanks to the skill of modern builders, it can caper and give us marvellous effects of lightness, but it is still at its best in the utterance of big and abstract ideas. To the genuine organ-lover, this aloofness will always be its greatest charm. No instrument has in its repertoire so much music fitted to serve as balm for harassed nerves. Only an organist can fully realise (though he cannot make it plain to other musicians) what it means to him, at the end of a worrying round of lessons and boiling the pot, to get to his organ, especially on a weekday evening, with the church to himself. Who can understand *Abt Vogler* so fully as he? At such a time the Prière of César Franck, or one of his Chorals, or a couple of soft stops and The Little Organ Book of old Sebastian . . .

BIBLIOGRAPHY

So much of an organist's work depends upon personality, initiative, and common-sense that, apart from primers on the purely technical side of organ-playing, text-books would appear to be of little use to him. This is true, but their indirect value is so considerable that he cannot afford to neglect them. They frequently touch on historical aspects of church and organ music with which he ought to be familiar, but for which he is unlikely to delve in Grove and similar volumes on his own account. Even when they differ widely on practical matters (as they usually do) he will derive a good deal of benefit from weighing the opposing dicta with a view to adopting those that seem best to agree with his own experience, or that seem likeliest to answer his peculiar needs.

Like the foregoing pages, this list of books is for the practising organist rather than for the pupil. Hence the absence of primers on organ-playing, counterpoint, extemporisation, and other technical subjects. With the exception of three works of a special character, no music is included, for obvious reasons.

A secondary use of this bibliography may be mentioned. It is a common experience that clergy and congregations wishing to give their organist a present of books are at a loss. Too frequently the gift takes the form of a handsomely bound (and heavy) copy of *The Messiah*, or *Elijah*, or the *Songs without Words*—good to see, but for practical purposes far less useful than the cheap edition the organist already has on his shelves. It is hoped that this list will be of use to both donors and recipients.

The comments on certain books that are new or unfamiliar, or whose titles hardly convey an adequate idea of their contents, are chiefly for the benefit of readers living in districts remote from publishers and booksellers.

There is a generally accepted convention that a bibliography should be silent on one of the most important points—the price of the books named. This reticence looks dignified, but it undoubtedly makes such a list less useful than it ought to be. As the prices of the books mentioned below range from two pennies to several pounds, there seems exceptionally good reason why convention should go by the board, so go it does.

The reader is warned, however, that owing to frequent fluctuations in cost, the list cannot pretend to be exact. So far as can be ascertained, the prices given are those at the time of writing (September, 1920). In a few cases of books being reprinted or still in the Press, approximate prices have been given.

ACCOMPANIMENT

Organ Accompaniment. J. F. Bridge. (Novello. 4s.)
Organ Accompaniment. H. W. Richards. (Joseph Williams. 5s.)
Organ Accompaniment to the Psalms. C. W. Pearce. (Winthrop Rogers. 2s. 6d.)

(Both Anglican chants and plain-song tones are treated in this little book. The specimen accompaniments show much ingenuity

and resource—perhaps too much in the case of some of the plain-song examples. There are interesting chapters on the use of the psalter.)

Accompanying Harmonies for Use with Briggs, Stainer, and Frere's "Manual of Plain-song." W. G. A. Shebbeare. (Novello. 7s.)

Organ Accompaniment to the Ordinary of the Mass. (Plain-song and Mediæval Music Society. 6s.)

(Two excellent collections of well-written modal accompaniments of a simple type.)

BACH

Johann Sebastian Bach. Philipp Spitta. English translation by Clara Bell and J. A. Fuller Maitland. 3 vols. (Novello. £1. 6s. 6d.) 1880.

J. S. Bach. Albert Schweitzer. English translation by Ernest Newman. 2 vols. (Breitkopf & Hartel. £1. 1s.) 1911.

(The most complete of recent books on Bach. It may be had through the leading music publishers.)

L'Esthétique de Jean Sébastien Bach. Andre Pirro. (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher.) 1907.

(Deals very fully with Bach's instrumentation, construction and use of characteristic motives—in fact, the whole of his æsthetic material.)

Johann Sebastian Bach. C. H. H. Parry. (Putnams. 12s. 6d.) 1909.

Johann Sebastian Bach, his Life, Art, and Work. Johann Nikolaus Forkel (1802). English translation by Charles Sanford Terry. (Constable. 21s.) 1920.

(Hitherto the only English version of this, the earliest of Bach's biographies, has been an inadequate one which appeared anonymously in 1820 and has long since been out of print. Professor Terry adds many notes and some scholarly and valuable appendices.)

Bach's Chorals. Charles Sanford Terry. (Cambridge University Press.) 2 vols. 1915 and 1917. Vol. I. 4s.; Vol. II., 7s. 6d.

(Vol. I. treats of the hymns and hymn melodies used in the Passions and Oratorios. Vol. II. deals with those appearing in the cantatas and motets. A most valuable work, giving details of Bach's instrumental and other treatment of the melodies, as well as exhaustive historical notes on the chorales themselves. A third volume, dealing with the melodies used in the organ works, is promised.)

THE CHOIR

The Art of Training Choir Boys. George C. Martin. (Novello. 6s.)

Church Choir Training. The Rev. J. Troutbeck. (Novello. 2s.)

Choristers' Singing Method. Haydn Keeton. (Curwen. 2s. 6d.)

(Dr Keeton deals more fully than most writers with the teaching of music-reading.)

The Boy's Voice. J. Spencer Curwen. (Curwen. 2s. 6d.)

(A symposium of unusual interest and value. The contributors range from cathedral organists to village schoolmasters.)

Voice Culture for Children. James Bates. (Novello. 7s.)
A Treatise on a Practical Method of Training Choristers. J. Varley Roberts. (Novello. 4s.)
Practical Hints on the Training of Choir Boys. G. Edward Stubbs. (Novello. 3s. 6d.)
The Organisation and Training of Parish Choirs. Francis T. Kennard. (*Musical Opinion* Office. 2s.) 1920.
(A simple and practical little book by a parish church organist, based on his experiences with voluntary choirs in poor districts.)

THE ORGAN

Organs and Tuning. Thomas Elliston. (Weekes. 21s.)
The Restoration of Organs. John Matthews. (*Musical Opinion* Office. 5s.) 1919.
(These two books are specially useful to organists in remote districts, and others who are liable to be called on for emergency repairs.)
The Church Organ. The Rev. Noel Bonavia-Hunt. (The Faith Press. 4s. 6d.) 1920.
The Recent Revolution in Organ-Building. George L. Miller. (New York: The Charles Francis Press. 5s.) 1913.
The Organ in France. Wallace Goodrich. (The Boston Music Company. 10s.) 1917.
(An excellent study of the construction and tonal characteristics of French organs, with suggestions for the registration of French organ music on American and English instruments.)
The Art of Organ Building. George A. Audsley. (New York: Dodd. $20.)
The Story of the Electric Organ. J. W. Hinton. (Weekes. 10s. 6d.) 1909.
A Comprehensive Dictionary of Organ Stops. James Ingall Wedgwood. (Winthrop Rogers. 7s. 6d.)

ORGAN-PLAYING AND ORGAN MUSIC

Organ Playing: Its Technique and Expression. A. Eaglefield Hull. (Augener, 4s. 6d.) 1911.
French Organ Music, Past and Present. Harvey Grace. (New York: H. W. Gray. Novello. $1.50.) 1919.
Organ Registration. Everett E. Truette. (Boston: Thompson. $2.50.) 1919.
(A very thorough treatment of the subject. Though written with American instruments in view, its general principles and many of its details apply to English organs.)
Organ Music. C. F. Abdy Williams. (Walter Scott. 3s. 6d.) 1905.
(A sketch of the rise and progress of organ music in various countries.)

PLAIN-SONG

The Elements of Plain-song. (The Plain-song and Mediæval Music Society. 3s.)

Plain-song. Francis Burgess. (Novello. 7s.)
Plain-chant. Dom Gatard, O.S.B. (The Faith Press. 4s. 6d.) 1920.
The Rudiments of Plain-chant. Francis Burgess. (*Musical Opinion* Office. 1s.) 1919.
(Dom Gatard's book is historical; the other three works are mainly practical.)

GENERAL

Music and Worship. The Venble. George Gardner, Archdeacon of Cheltenham. (S.P.C.K. 2s. 6d.) 1918.
Church Music. The Rev. Maurice F. Bell. (Mowbray. Arts of the Church Series. 2s. 6d.)
Church Music. The Rev. A. S. Duncan-Jones. (Robert Scott. Handbooks of Catholic Faith and Practice. 3s. 6d.) 1920.
(Three books by clergy qualified to speak on the musical as well as the liturgical side of the subject.)
Church Music. Sydney H. Nicholson. (The Faith Press. 2s. 6d.) 1919.
(A very practical book, dealing with the possibilities of various types of church—large town, village, etc.)
The Improvement of Music in Parish Churches: a Practical Scheme of Help. Sydney H. Nicholson. (The Faith Press. 2d.) 1920.
The Psalms: their Structure and Musical Rendering. A. Madeley Richardson. (Winthrop Rogers. 3s.)
Church Music. A. Madeley Richardson. (Longmans. Handbooks for the Clergy. 3s. 6d.)
Music in the Church. Peter Christian Lutkin. (Milwaukee: The Young Churchman Company. London: Mowbray. 4s. 6d.) 1910.
Dictionary of Hymnology. J. Julian. (Murray. 32s.)
Companion to Hymns A. & M. The Rev. C. W. H. Brooke. (Pitman. 3s. 6d.) 1914.
(For use with the 1875 edition of *A & M.* Contains a mass of information, historical and biographical, with suggestions as to choice of hymns.)
The Tenor Tune Book. Various composers. (The Faith Press. 2s. 6d.) 1918.
A Book of Descants. Alan Gray. (Cambridge University Press. Organ edition, 8s. 6d. Treble part, 3s. 6d.) 1920.
The Faburden Chantbook. Godfrey Sceats and Francis Burgess. Novello. 1s. 6d.) 1920
(These three collections of music are included because they embody an attempt to revive the use of faux-bourdon, and so are likely to provide a solution of a familiar parish church problem: "How can we develop congregational singing and at the same time maintain or even increase the interest of the choir?" The first two books deal with well-known hymn tunes, the third with the plain-song psalm tones.)
Cathedral Organists, Past and Present. John E. West. (Novello. 7s.)

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